BUSINESS / B1
BIR surpasses August collection

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2 RP activists deported by Singapore

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Syria probes attack on US Embassy, accuses US of fueling terrorism

NEWS / A2
Vice Gov Recto tagged in attack on Batangas governor

ACROSS / A15
Nurse exec linked to illegal recruitment

Chinese justice for all at the click of a mouse

BEIJING—A COURT IN China has been using a software program to help decide prison sentences in more than 1,500 criminal cases, a Hong Kong newspaper said on Wednesday.

CONTINUED A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, September 14, 2006 ++ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 270 P18 inquirer.com.ph

2 Aussie pilots refuse to take off shoes at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

TWO AUSTRALIAN PILOTS OF A PASSENGER airline bound for Sydney refused to take off their shoes at the final security checkpoint at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1 late Tuesday night. Their reason: The airport's floor is dirty.

Airport authorities said the Airline Operators

CONTINUED A17

Senate-PCGG showdown

Sabio: I won't answer questions at hearing

By TJ Burgonio

POSITIONS APPEAR TO HAVE HARDENED IN THE SHOWdown between the Senate and the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

More than 24 hours after he was arrested and detained by the Senate for snubbing its inquiry into the alleged issuance of government-sequestered corporations, Camilo Sabio, 70, declared he would not yield to senators at today's hearing.

The otherwise soft-spoken PCGG chair, who had been afflicted with unstable blood pressure since his arrest on Tuesday morning, confirmed he would appear at the 1 p.m. hearing by the Senate committees on government corporations and public services.

"[But] I will not be compelled. Nobody can compel me to answer questions," Sabio told reporters outside the room at the Senate clinic and medical services department where he had been held since his arrest at his office.

"I will stand on that. It's a matter of principle for me to believe the law. I'll believe the law, but I will not answer questions," he said, indicating that he would invoke Executive Order No. 1 which says PCGG officials cannot be required to testify in legislative, judicial and administrative proceedings.

EO 1, issued by President Corazon Aquino in 1986, created the PCGG.

But Aquino told reporters yesterday that EO 1 was not meant to exempt PCGG officials from congressional inquiries.

She said that during her term, PCGG officials were allowed to attend hearings as long as they were informed of the topics to be discussed.

Aquino also said there was a difference between the Senate then and now.

"In my day, all I asked of Congress was to clarify to us when the inquiries would be so the officials could prepare. If the officials were abroad, another date could

SENATE A10

THIS is where former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante is being detained by US immigration officials. Kenosha County is 96 km away from Chicago.

MARY ZHENG/KENOSHA PRESS/KRT/MCT CHICAGO

Joc-joc takes on Condi in freedom bid

By Philip C. Tubeza

IT'S JOC-JOC BOLANTE VS. CONDI Rice.

Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante is taking on US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, naming her and other ranking US government officials as respondents to his petition to gain freedom in the United States.

In a 26-page petition for a writ of habeas corpus, Bolante asked a Wisconsin district court to order Rice, US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and other US officials to release him from custody.

The former Philippine agriculture undersecretary said his continued detention at Kenosha county in Wisconsin and the decision of the US Embassy in Manila to revoke his B1/B2 visa were illegal.

"The revocation of his visa was necessary to material and formal requirements of a lawful revocation and it has been determined that he is not an intending immigrant pursuant to (the US Immigration and Nationality Act)."

JOC-JOC A4

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo answers a question as European Commission President Jose Barroso listens during Tuesday's joint press conference in Brussels, Belgium.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Bolante made fortune selling memorial plans

By Fe Zamora

JOCELYN "JOC-JOC" BOLANTE USED TO MAKE A LIVing selling services for the dead that had made him wealthy beyond his wildest dreams.

SPECIAL REPORT

That's why when he joined President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration in 2001, friends and relatives scratched their heads.

"I even asked him, what for? *Magulo yan* (There's trouble there)," says his elder brother, Vicente Junior, a government retiree.

Today, Bolante, 55, is engulfed in Mr Arroyo's worst

BOLANTE A4

UNDATED photo of Bolante with a Capiz provincial official. Bolante has say government job a mistake.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

EC expresses concern over RP political killings

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

BRUSSELS—THE EUROPEAN COMMISsion yesterday expressed concern over a surge in extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and welcomed President Macapagal-Arroyo's moves to investigate the murders.

Mr Arroyo met with EC President Jose Manuel Barroso at the EC headquarters in Berlaymont Building. After the 30-minute meeting, the two officials conducted a press conference.

Barroso said that the political shootings were "a matter of concern" and that Mr Arroyo's creation of the commission headed by former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo was "a first step toward finding proof."

"We welcomed her intention to crack down on extrajudicial killings by creating a commission of inquiry and taking steps to investigate these cases rapidly. I believe that doing so will further enhance the Philippines' standing as serious on human rights globally and more importantly within Asia," Barroso said.

He said that while the European Commission applauded Mr Arroyo's decision to abolish the death penalty, the rash of unresolved murders of journalists and political activists under her watch leaves much to be desired.

"We had to fight terrorism, as you know well our position on that matter, but we have to fight terrorism respecting values of human democracy," Barroso said.

He said the European Commission accepted Mr Arroyo's invitation to send monitoring teams in the Philippines to assess the situation. "We should put ourselves in those countries that are able to receive them," Barroso said.

He also said the European Commission and its member states would extend assistance to the Philippines, particularly in strengthening the judiciary.

Reuters news agency said that the

EUROPEAN A9

Tourists urged to have blast in Batanes

AN IVATAN fisherman readies to cast his net somewhat of the pounding surf in Ivana, Batanes.

By Blanche S. Rivera

BASCO ISLAND, BATANES—THE PROvincial government hopes that in time, a blessing will finally emerge from the wind and rain that constantly lash these storm-battered islands.

Unfamiliar to foreigners and uncharted by most Filipinos, Batanes, a cluster of seven islands on the northern tip of the Philippines, has practically been nothing more than a reference point for the weather bureau.

And its reputation as being "in the eye of the storm" has cost the province much-needed investments over the years, according to Vice Gov Constante Cortillejos.

"The problem is that Pagasa (Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) has made us a reference point for typhoons, and [assessors] shy away from typhoons," he told the Inquirer during a recent visit to the province.

But Cortillejos is hoping the curse would soon become a come-on for tourists who thrive on adventure, and

TOURISTS A12

A2
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Recto tagged in attack on gov

Esperon: It's over for Lim, Querubin military careers

By Dona Pazzibugan

IT IS OVER FOR DISGRACED MGEN Scout Ranger Regiment commander, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin as far as their military careers are concerned.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said there would be no "second chance" for Lim and Querubin after they let themselves become involved in yet another attempt to overthrow the government.

Neither can other officers from elite units found to have been involved in the Feb. 24 coup plot expect leniency from Esperon.

"I know General Lim has been given enough chances. He knew the others, like Col. Querubin, I have respect for them. That warrant are also punished," said Esperon who addressed the Manila Overseas Press Club recently.

"We assure you that we will apply the full force of the law," he said.

Lim and Querubin were among the leaders of the Young Officers Union that staged the bloody December 1989 coup d'etat in which 50 soldiers and civilians were killed and another 570 wounded.

Lim, who was a captain at the time, led the rumbling of tanks at the Makati business district while Querubin was among those who led siege to the military's general headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

The two were detained in the same military stockade in Fort Bonifacio and allowed to return to military service in 1993, after the government offered a general amnesty for all coup plotters, including the leader of the 1989 coup, the then Lt. Col. Gregorio Honasan.

"[Lim] was given the position of [then Scout Ranger] regiment commander and he was promoted to brigadier general by the same President he wants to—call it bogus President. Is he saying his promotions were bogus?" Esperon said.

He said Querubin, a recipient of the Medal of Valor, would have gone to the rank for a few months' time.

"I don't think past glories can ever be an excuse for going out of bounds. They have committed offenses that violated the Articles of War, therefore they must answer for their transgressions," Esperon said.

Army chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino blamed Esperon's friend on coup plotters.

"Wala na kaming pamasahe [We can still be given amnesty]. They've thanked to the military," Tolentino said.

Lim and 24 of his officers are detained at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, while undergoing investigation for possible court martial.

Querubin, former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda and 11 other mostly senior Marine officers are detained in the Bonifacio Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio.

Esperon said even the junior officers involved in the Feb. 24 plot would get no leniency from him.

"Like you also a captain in 1989. Transpose that to the captains now. He will not give them another chance. We will let military justice take its due course," he said.

Esperon said the military "will proceed very carefully with the trial of the soldiers.

"We want to be very sure of what we are doing. We want due process to which the punishment is handed down, those who are guilty will be given the punishment they deserve," he said.

Slay try linked to coup plot, says Gonzalez

By Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Armando Nocum

CALAMBA, LAGUNA—THOUGH he initially dismissed suggestions that his vice governor may have been behind the foiled attempt on his life, Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez is now convinced that his political rival allegedly masterminded the bomb attack that killed two of his aides last June.

Sanchez will personally appear today before Batangas City prosecutor Leonor Castillo to file murder and murder charges against Vice Gov. Richard Recto, said his lawyer Reinaldo Gozos.

The governor narrowly escaped death when his Hummer H2 sport utility vehicle exploded shortly after it left the provincial capitol on the evening of June 5.

The two explosions ripped through the vehicle but Sanchez was able to jump out before the second blast. He suffered burns but his police bodyguard and driver were killed.

When contacted by the Inquirer, Recto said he was advised by his lawyer to wait for the formal charges to be filed before going for comment.

Senior Inspector Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the bomb attack on Sanchez was the handiwork of rebel Magdalo soldiers involved in the failed Feb. 24 coup.

RECTO

Gonzalez, who heads the inter-agency task force investigating the Feb. 24 coup plot, said the panel would be announcing its findings today and would recommend the indictment of 13 civilians and military officers for allegedly participating in the plot.

"The failed coup last Feb. 24 and the destabilization are connected to the ambush of Sanchez," Gonzalez said, adding that the task force has obtained information that big politicians paid the Magdalo soldiers P1 million to carry out the assassination.

He said the Sanchez ambush was intended as a show that government was helpless in maintaining peace and order and that the situation of the state had already succumbed to sowing terror and violence.

Gonzalez would not divulge the names of the 12 to be prosecuted on charges ranging from coup d'etat to rebellion, but hinted that "high profile civilians" like influential businessmen are included in the charge sheets.

Gozos said that among the witnesses in the cases to be filed by Sanchez are Army Lts. Hiero Bautista and Victor Li, Hiram Sadsad, Jr.

The two were members of the rebel Magdalo group of soldiers which later called themselves the Mahabaharang Hukbong Filipino (MHP).

Gozos said two security officers in the Batangan capitol who claimed to have seen the suspected Magdalo members roaming around the capitol premises moments before the explosion would also serve as witnesses.

Sumalinog and Escalona, who are in the custody of the Army's intelligence Security Group, executed affidavits at the ISG office in Fort Bonifacio on Sept. 12.

In his affidavit, Escalona told of a plan to assassinate Sanchez being discussed in a meeting in a hotel suite in Quezon in April 2006. He said Sanchez was to be assassinated so Recto would become governor and be able to help fund the Magdalo group.

He quoted a certain Angie as saying that Recto had already given an initial payment and would give the balance upon completion of the job, which was the targeting of the governor.

In his affidavit, also dated Sept. 12, Sumalinog said he was on a meeting in a house in La Vista, Quezon City in March 2006, in which Recto was also present.

According to Sumalinog, when he asked what Recto was doing there, he was told that the vice governor would be helping the group with funds.

He also remembered Guy asking if a pound of C-4 could destroy a Hummer. He told Guy it was. Escalona also would learn at which point Guy called Sanchez who said a pound of C-4 could indeed do the job.

According to Sumalinog, when he asked Guy why he wanted to know, Guy said it was because a Hummer was the vehicle that Sanchez used often.

Gozos said Sanchez was convinced of the seriousness of the witnesses "because it specifically detailed some incidents before the bombing."

"As a lawyer, I think the witnesses are keen and the seriousness of the witnesses will stand in court. The case is strong," he said. With a report from Alyssa Dayo

Former AFP chief Nazareno dies at 63

FORMER ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF Gen. Jesulito Nazareno died early yesterday due to complications from liver cancer. He was 63.

Nazareno, who served under former president Joseph Estrada, had slipped into a coma for a day and a half at the Makati Medical Center before he succumbed at around 4 a.m. yesterday, his son Junior said.

The general is survived by his three children, Jessica, 26, Jessmar, 23, and Jollie, 24, who were at his bedside at the time of his death. His wife Minerva died three years ago due to breast cancer.

"He wasn't in pain. He was heavily sedated," Jessmar recalled.

Nazareno's remains were brought yesterday to the Evangelical Church inside the military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo for a wake and military honors.

Nazareno was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2005. He underwent radiation therapy and was even nearly cleared of the disease.

But in late 2005, Nazareno was diagnosed with liver cancer and underwent chemotherapy. Dona Z. Pazzibugan

GMA backtracks, won't sign pact on int'l court

By Gil Cabacungan

BRUSSELS (VM FOTO)—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has reversed at the last minute on the suggestion of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago to declare the Philippines' intention to finally sign the Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court even as the expense of having military activities the US which has opposed from the past.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that the President did not take the issue in her meeting with Filipino officials on Tuesday. "The Philippines remains non-committal to the part in the President believes the country needs more time to observe how the system works," Bunye said.

Defensor claimed that the President had agreed to have the country's support for the ICC the day before the EU meeting.

The President is in Brussels to win back European's leaders who have been privately skeptical on her administration's human rights records and Europe's businessmen critical of the country's poor record in honoring contracts, particularly the void Miley Aquino-Enrile Boundary and Victor Li, Hiram Sadsad.

The two were members of the rebel Magdalo group of soldiers which later called themselves the Mahabaharang Hukbong Filipino (MHP).

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Guimaras readies charges vs Petron, Solar I officials

By Nestor P. Burgos, Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT of Guimaras is readying criminal charges against executives of Petron Corp. and the owners of the tanker tanker Solar 1, which spilled over a million liters of bunker oil along its coast, threatening the livelihood and health of its people.

Lawyer Haydel Nava II, provincial legal officer, said they will cite the officials of Petron and the Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. (SMDC), the owners of the tanker, for RA 9275 (Clean Water Act of 2004) and Republic Act 8749 (Clean Air Act of 1999) and Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000).

The tanker sank 33.3 nautical miles southwest of Nueva Valencia town on Aug. 11. It has contaminated 58 barangays in four towns in Guimaras and two towns in Iloilo. Some 40,000 persons have been affected and at least one death has been reportedly linked to the fumes released by the oil spill.

Chairman Gov. JC Rahman Nava said they are studying the statement of the Department of Justice task force investigating the oil spill, which cleared Petron of any criminal liabilities.

"I might have prompted the case on plea-bargaining," the governor told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

No posting yet for Palparan; another retired general gets NSA job

MALACAÑANG HAS APPOINTED retired Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay as deputy National Security Adviser for counter-insurgency operations, a position earlier reserved for controversial newly retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita confirmed yesterday that Cabuay and not Palparan will get the position.

Ermita said the Palace was still looking for an "appropriate" post for Palparan, who retired early this week from the military with commendation insignia rowing to go after being allegedly being behind unexplained killings of militants in the country.

"Definitely, (Palparan) will have an opportunity," he told reporters. "We will see to it that his future is well-taken care of."

Asked whether Palparan's new job will still have to do with counter-insurgency, the executive secretary said he could not say for now.

He said though that they could find a good position for Palparan, as he noted that it was within the power of President Macapagal-Arroyo to create new offices or positions depending on the needs of the government.

This as Ermita dismissed opprobrious of human rights groups protesting that the eventual appointment of Palparan to a new position in government dealing with the communist rebellion against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army would see more cases of human rights violations.

"That's their own opinions of the fellow," he said.

Ermita said that while so much evidences had been hurled against Palparan, he challenged those groups to come out with evidences against the general, especially since the newly formed Melo Commission has started to do its task of looking into the extrajudicial killings of militants and journalists. Christine O. Avendaño

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THE LANDMARK

Tourists urged to have a blast in Batanes

who may want to experience exactly what it's like living with 200 kph winds and riding a balanse in local boat-race giant waves because typhoons encouraging outcomes.

"Tourists usually want to see the beauty of the typhoons. They call stop here. The negative can be used to our advantage," Castillejos told.

Postcard-pretty

Less than 2,000 tourists were documented to have visited Batanes last year, a pity considering the sights—and insights—that this postcard-pretty place offers.

Batanes is known for its centuries-old stone houses and churches, lush hills and cliffs, and friendly folk called Ivatans. But fear are among that the biggest secrets have developed a complex we should not ensure that they do not need a weather bureau to tell them when the wind will bring bad news.

"It's different here from Manila, where even 30 kph winds are enough to shut schools," the chuckles in, say. Drinking from," said Castillejos, who once lived near the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City where he studied for a master's degree.

"Here, you have houses that have withstood storms. The walls are thick. The people here are prepared. They know when a storm's coming," he said.

So much so that when Pagasa raises Signal No. 2 in Batanes, a housewife tending her sari-sari store would not close shop for the day and a fisherman preparing to go out to sea would most likely proceed to get his catch.

"It's just Signal No. 2. That's nothing," Leonardo Hontiveros, a councilor in the municipality of Ivana, said, as Pagasa raised a storm signal over the province and text messages started coming in from Manila, warning this reporter and friends that it was unsafe to fly because another storm was headed here.

Drizzle, soft breeze

"If you go to Batanes in July or August, better bring all your clothes and a sweater because you're likely to spend Valentine's Day here," a Pagasa official once joked.

But Hontiveros was actually correct.

Apart from a drizzle and a soft breeze, Storm Signal No. 2 did nothing to Batanes. The planes and sandbar flight for Batanes (2,311 feet) pushed through, and the Asian Spirit flight the next day was hardly delayed, much less cancelled.

(But municipal workers and students often get a break when storm signals are raised because provincial government and Department of Education officials are compelled to suspend classes or work.)

Castillejos recently flew repeatedly to Manila. Even when Pagasa officials have raised Signal No. 2 in Batanes, he does not cancel a planned trip home and goes to the Manila domestic airport anyway.

Past experience have shown that the weather in Batanes as projected in Manila is hardly the way it is in the far-flung province, he said.

"Even the airline knows this," he added. "When there is an announcement in Manila, airline officials simply call their office in Batanes and ask for the wind limit. And they fly when they're told it's safe to fly."

'Happy'

Batanes is almost two hours by plane from Manila. Of its seven islands, only three—Basco, Sabtang and Ithayat—are inhabited. There are only over 15,000 people in the three islands, almost 10,000 of whom are in Batan, according to Castillejos.

"The only time people stay indoors is when they feel that the wind is too strong for them to even walk down the street—and that should be around 180 to 200 kph," Hontiveros said.

Ruth Salazar, a native of Ibaid who has lived in Ivana for eight years, said the locals were often "happy" to host to unusual event of a storm because the wind would then be strong enough to cause tornados to fall and logs to be washed down from the mountains for easy picking.

"You will see people going out in the shore and lullabies during a storm. It doesn't bother them," she said.

But couples and couples to the province, Salazar has found that the most difficult time for Batanes residents is not the typhoon season from June to December but the "winter months" from December to February.

'Vakul'

Then, the cold, the temperature could drop as low that "Regular would turn her," and getting out even with layers and layers of clothing would be an almost task.

The Ivatan elders usually wear a kind of headdress called "vakul" to protect them from relentless heat and relentless cold.

The vakul is made from a type of grass that grows in Batanes (The same grass used for the native houses' roofs) and has an albeit ibang frame also made from the same material.

The traditional Ivatan house is made of stone and lime, with walls about a meter thick, its windows are small and few.

Some houses have a rock with a hole buried deep into the ground nearby. A rope tied through the hole in the rock and connected to the roof serves as an anchor, ensuring that the roof would not get blown away during strong typhoons.

Even the two-story modern cement houses inconspicuously lining the roads of Basco have walls at least half a meter thick to withstand harsh winds.

"People have no need to living with storms," Hontiveros declared.

And visitors may have much to learn from living through their own depressions, literally.

WE PITY THE woman wears the traditional "vakul" headdress which protects Batanes residents during the cold and hot seasons.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, September 14, 2006
Triumph of the Cross

1st Reading: Num 21:4-9
Gospel: John 3:13-17

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one has ever gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, [events] through him the world might be saved."

Commentary

In the ancient Church this was the first day of Lent, the time of harvest was recently over, the following of Jesus and entering the order of our first generation to God in our baptism. Like the people of the desert we speak out against God and are in need of acknowledging our sin, and surrendering the rest another. We must look upon Jesus the Crucified, without whom there is no door to God for the person and personal meaning. Including in the Cross God One, humble and obedient, even unto death. Today we look and kneel in worship and gratitude before the depth of the love of God for us — again.

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P47-B supplemental budget OKd

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE APPROVED LAST NIGHT THE Administration-proposed P46.8-billion supplemental budget for 2006 aimed at its stability, except for some realignment of funds from some agencies to the Department of Education.

Voting 14-0, the senators approved on third and final reading a "line-item budget" that would supplement the P607.38-billion enacted 2005 budget.

"The biggest winners here are the education sector of the Department of Education and the University of the Philippines," Sen. Franklin Drilon, chair of the Senate committee, said in a briefing shortly after the approval of the supplemental outlay.

The biggest appropriations in the budget as P46.8 billion will cover the increase in the internal revenue allotment of local government units.

The DepEd got the second biggest share of P9.161 billion. This amount includes provisions for the hiring of 18,000 new teachers, the building of more public schools and the payment of long-overdue benefits for thousands of school teachers and non-teaching staff.

The other allocations were to the Department of Agriculture, Bulacia, P4.2192 billion; Department of Interior and Local Government, P1.375 billion; Department of Science and Technology, P700 million; Department of Social Welfare and Development, P359.5 million; Department of Transportation and Communication, P1.608 billion;

Commission on Elections, P738.226 million; Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund, P9.925 billion; Allocation to Local Government Units, P1.830 billion; Retirement Gratuity Fund, P4.095 billion, and Calamity Fund, P1.1175 billion.

The senators however slashed the P500-million standby fund for the repatriation of workers from war-ravaged Lebanon to P50-million after Israel has said it stopped following the declaration of a ceasefire.

The P50 million would be added to the P554-million fund of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration for the emergency repatriation of workers.

The senators allocated P1.7 billion for the oil spill off Guimaras Island and P366 million for the rehabilitation of the areas around Mayon Volcano.

Drilon said the senators also appropriated P3.23 billion to cover the deficiency of the national government to unpaid premium payments to the Government Service Insurance System covering the period July 1997 to December 1998.

"We must emphasize the definitiveness in premium contributions is the major source of continuing domination and disappointment among our beneficiaries of workers," he said.

The budget of the BOTC was reduced by P2 billion with the deletion of the equity rental fee, while some P14 million was cut from the Professional Regulation Commission's budget after it decided against a rotation of the bookage-oriented nursing board exams.

Much of the slashed funds were realigned to the education sector.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

1. The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) announces the acceptance of applications for the following COURTS:

1. MTCC Br. 4, Manila	5. RTC Br. 47, Quezon City
2. MTCC Pililla-Jalajala, Rizal	6. RTC Br. 2, Borongan, Eastern Samar
3. RTC Br. 168, San Juan - Camarines Sur	7. MCTC Bacolod-San Nicolas-Northern Samar
4. RTC Br. 69, Iriga City	

Applications must be submitted NOT LATER THAN October 13, 2006. Applicants must also submit to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Fax No. 552-9912) five No. 552-9540) 5 copies of each of the following:

Application Letter
Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form 1 down-loadable from the JBC Website: http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph
Picture (2x2)
Certificate of Good Standing or latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer
ITR for 3 preceding years
Clearance from NBI, Ombudsman, Office of the Bar Confidant and employer
Transcript of Records
Police Clearance from place of residence
Certificate of Bar Rating

2. The JBC announces that the following are the applicants or recommendees for:

A. Four (4) positions of ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the COURT OF APPEALS:

1. ACOSTA, Francisco P.	40. LAWTON, Jose Aurora C.
2. ACUPIDO, Guillermo P.	41. LAGES, Wilfredo L.
3. ALMA, Rose Mary M.	42. LAUREA, Evangeline D.
4. ALMARIMA, Reynaldo A.	43. LLORENA, Edgardo T.
5. ARAULLO, Nancy D.	44. MACABENTO, Paquito Ambong T.
6. ANTONIO, Rustico C.	45. MACALINO, Florito G.
7. BABARAN, Raul V.	46. MAGBUHOS, Fortunato L.
8. BAGUIO, Vicente D.	47. MAGSIGAY, Pedro R.
9. BALINGIT, Perlita J.	48. MANGOTARA, Bernadeo P.
10. BARGUILLAS, Manuel N.C.	49. MARAMBA, Josue M.
11. BARRIOS, Tadeo Katsumo J.	50. MARIANO, Rebecca R.
12. BAYNOSA, Manuel M.	51. MATO, Manuel V.
13. BERNARDO, Diana B.	52. MENDOZA, Marietta A.
14. BONIFACIO, Rodolfo R.	53. NERI, Dolores A. R.
15. BUENO, Francis H.	54. NICOLE, Delfin V.
16. CABETE, Ofelia R.	55. PADERANGA, Sylvia B.
17. CHUA, Anita S.	56. PANGANIBAN, Edilberto S.
18. CRUZ, Ramon A.	57. PARDEDE, Marivic P.
19. CRUZ, Shirley C.	58. PARREÑO, Victoria Isabel A.
20. CUEVA, Edgardo B.	59. PERALTA, Angel B.
21. DELOS SANTOS, Edgardo L.	60. PINEDA, Elvira T.
22. DIMAANO, Teresita N.	61. PE ALVAREZ, Francis C.
23. DOMINGO, Lorna A.	62. PRATO, Reuben T.
24. DUMAYAS, Ramon B.	63. PULIDO-TAPUCAR, Elizabeth C.
25. DUMELOD, Marian A. P.	64. QUIMPO, Nilo Angelita P.
26. ELBINIAS, Ishmael D.	65. QUIROZ, Jose Reynaldo C.
27. ERUM, Bernardito S.	66. RAMIREZ, Jose L.
28. ESCUDERO, Jose L.	67. REDULLA, Lucas S.
29. ESPARCIL, Jose Lito M.	68. REYES, Ramon A.
30. ESTEVES, Antonio A. M.	69. ROQUE, Ricardo R.
31. FABROS, Amelia A.	70. ROS, Reynaldo G.
32. FAMADOR, Joel M.	71. SADANG, Martina Cosmos C.
33. FRUELDA, Romeo J. S.	72. SESE, Danilo V.
34. FRANCISCO, Renato C.	73. SINTICO, Manuel D.J.
35. GACUTAN, Angelita A.	74. SORIANO, Amelia B.
36. GADPLAN, Rafael B.	75. SORIANO, Renato F.
37. GALVEZ, Danilo P.	76. STA. MARIA, Edwin D.
38. GARAY, Lilibeth B.	77. SUAREZ, Lucil C.
39. GARRIDO, Crescentino L.	78. SUING, Jose A.
40. GARVIDO, Edgar G.	79. TABLIZO, Romeo A.
41. GENILO, Lilia D. T.	80. TANGUILAN, Elizabeth I.
42. GONZAGA, Agustino V.	81. UMALI, Marcelo B.
43. GRULLA, Cecilia M.	82. UMALI, Roderick T.
44. HERRERA, Oscar Jr. C.	83. VALENCIA, Manuela P.
45. INFANTE, Amelia T.	84. VILLANUEVA, Edgardo B.
46. ISTING, Rosalind D.	85. YAP, Sheriffen B.
47. FUERMELEB, Philemon	86. YBAÑEZ, Edna A.
48. LACAP, Reynaldo P.	

B. MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC), REGION VIII - SAN JUAN ST., BERNARDO SOUTHERN LEYTE (LGE. Juanito B.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than September 26, 2006 to the JBC Secretariat.

4. All applicants for all judicial positions must submit to the JBC Secretariat ASAP the fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1, current cellphone and landline numbers, and current residence and e-mail addresses.

September 12, 2006

(Sgd.) MA. LUISA D. VILLAMAYA
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

Corrections

IN THE SEPT. 13 ISSUE, THE CREDELLE OF TURNOVER OF "Gaijin" massive to culture scholar on Page A9, misstated the name of the artist who painted the sculpture that would be given to Arsi Ambahan Memorial High School in Danag, Hagonoy,Bulacan, on Nov. 24. The artist's name is "Ben Benson... not Ilbens.

...

IN the same issue, the front-page banner story—"Japan arrests three in P1.6B fraud"—misstated the name of one of the companies that the Senate is investigating in connection with their alleged loans. The name of the company is Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp., not Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Communications.

...

IN the same issue, a front-page story..."Most evidence sought to back Ugas appointee"...misstated the date of the 20th anniversary of the alleged opposition by the Virgin Mary to a Columbia man. The 500 National Pilgrimage of Lips for Conversion, Consecration and Repentance, and the National Day of Prayer, Repentance and Consecration of Our Nation. The three events were held on Sept. 12...not Sept. 13.

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"Listen, everyone who lives on earth! Look for a signal flag to be raised on the mountaintops! Listen!..."
Isaiah 18:3

Noli backers join Cha-cha train, say Con-con is way to go

By Norman Bordadora

A CITIZENS' ORGANIZATION that pushed for the presidential candidacy of the then popular broadcaster and now Vice President Noli de Castro in 2004 has joined the Charter change debate, lashing out at opponents of the campaign against a people's initiative and a constituent assembly to change the Constitution.

The Koalisyon ng Pilipinong Mamamayan (KPM) launched a broadside against the opposition Saturday, saying that the "illegal, immoral and unconstitutional" attempt to change the Constitution through a people's initiative.

The statement of the self-announced opposition alliance included all the familiar names—evangelista and editorial personalities—who campaigned for Arroyo during the 2004 elections.

Among those who launched a barrage of flares to fight what they called her

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Bolante made fortune selling memorial plans

[illegible] political scandal that had you nearly cost his presidency.

He is detained in a US immigration cell after his arrest on his arrival in Los Angeles in July.

The 58 Bolantes in Manila had considered his visa and put him on a blacklist barring his re-entry into the country. This followed his ouster move by the Philippine Senate of sweetener for his arrest for ignoring its repeated summons to appear in a hearing on a P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

Bolante has decided to seek political asylum in the United States rather than face deportation and his eventual return home. He says communist guerrillas are threatening to execute him for allegedly messing up with money intended for farmers.

International Line grants a refugee status to persons outside their country with a "well-founded fear of persecution." This must first be established.

"The media have been unfair," says his brother. "He built himself up for years, only to be ruined within a short period."

Victoria Bolante Jr. says his brother has been hurt by claims he pocketed hefty commissions from the fertilizer fund.

He also said that his brother's retirement has become a bum of jokes.

Bolante was supposed to have been cleared from the civil registry dark cloud and retain a girl's name. Ms Tellez thought Jocelyn was a unique name for the box and decided to go for it. "Ms Tellez has a sense of humor," says his junior.

P266.5M in assets

Three years before he joined the Arroyo administration on February, 2001, Bolante bought a house on a 2,000-sq. m. lot in Ayala-Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City for P5.8 million.

The house was demolished to give way to a new, eight-bedroom structure he Bolante, his wife, Ma. Carol, and their four children.

In the garage was a fleet of luxury cars, including a Mercedes C240, Mercedes 280TE, Mercedes 300E, BMW 728 IX6, GMC Jimmy, Lexus E200, Honda Accord and a Nissan Cefiro, all acquired while Bolante was president of Pradential Life Plans Inc. (PLPI).

When Bolante joined the Department of Agriculture as undersecretary he submitted a statement on February 2001 showing his assets and liabilities as administrative officer and finance as a P40,000 monthly salary, he initially had P266.5 million in real estate, stocks, bonds, cars, jewelry, paintings, antiques, books, furniture and cash in the bank.

He also had memberships in the exclusive Tagaytay Highland Golf and Country Club, Ayala Alabang Golf and Country Club, Puerto Azul Golf and Beach Resort. Bolante's biggest asset — total of P94.46M — would be with PLPI, the pre-need company he surrounded with former Ambassador to the Holy See Francisco Tatad in 1993.

Architect of fund scam

A report by two Senate committees that conducted investigative hearings into Bolante was the "architect" and "brains" in a government scheme that allegedly diverted P728 million in fertilizer funds to Mr Arroyo's campaign in May 2004.

The report said that Bolante "cunningly, jokingly made anomalous arrangements, 50 generous and 25 unjustified the unconditional release of the fund."

The committees recommended the filing of criminal and administrative charges against Bolante, former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo, Undersecretary Ramon Rebagay Jr., documentary Belinda Ibarguen, Assistant Secretary Jose Bella Mendez and all DA regional directors.

Bolante snubbed the Senate hearings, ignoring four subpoenas and one invitation.

He then reportedly went to the United States, Australia, Norway, Finland and other destinations to attend meetings in the invitation of Pradential International, the firm's highest official in the position or position.

Supporters clam up

Bolante's family and friends, especially the fortunate, however, were mum about his whereabouts, despite a statement of assent issued by the Senate in February.

Even after Bolante's arrest, Ambassador Ishi, chair of the Presidentiable group of companies, received a call from Bolante's wife Ma. Carol, a source close to the family told the Inquirer.

According to the source, Ms. Bolante asked Ilita to "put in a good word" about her husband in case reports from the US came despicement would inquire about her husband's professional history after signed. "He is a good friend," he says.

Bolante and Ilita had met at Loyola Heights when both studied in the 1970s, selling plots of land in park cemeteries and funeral services. Bolante was then simultaneously working on a economics degree at the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City where he was also student council president.

Upon graduation in 1972, Bolante went full time with Loyola as manager in Dalupiri area, and later as in Pearson Victoria. "He topped the sales consistently" his brother says.

Arroyos

Expanding the Loyola network in Davao in 1974, the Cagandos, then only 23 years old, was invited to join the Rotary Club, where he met Mr Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel.

Jun Bolante left school at Loyola, which belonged to the Poyet family. "He rose to the ranks but having no surname, my brothers have to had no chance of going up," Victoria Junior said. In 1975, Alex Bolante and a Jack Barrios bolted the Loyola to form the Pradential Life Plan Inc., (PLPI), a pre-need company that competed with Loyola.

As marketing chief, Bolante organized an aggressive sales staff. One of his recruits was Manuel Blanco, a table September with Loyola. "He gave me an offer I could not refuse. He gave me a car and a chance to be trained on his marketing style," Blanco recalls.

Nothing impossible

Bolante's marketing approach was simple, Blanco said. "Nothing is impossible if you have a plan, which means Plan A, Plan B, Plan C and so forth. If Plan A fails, you go to the next, and the next. Or you may combine several plans. Our thing I've learned—it worked," he said.

By 1985, PLPI had its own building in Legaspi Village, Makati. In 1994, PLPI expanded from memorial plans to pension plans with the founding of Pradential Pension Plan Inc. (PPPI). In 1997, Pradential Educational Plan Inc. (PEPI) was also established.

Bolante himself became president of PLPI and its affiliate, APPOMA Pitt., the country's biggest distributor of American cutlery. He was also director of more than a dozen Pradential-related companies and events.

Outside Pradential Life, Bolante was preoccupied with Rotary International. A copy of his bio-data says Bolante had a "200 per cent" attendance in club meetings since 1974. He served in various Rotary posts here and abroad and received numerous awards.

Bolante campaigned for Mr Arroyo when she ran for senator in 1992, and helped her strengthen Rotary and PLPI networks, in her contest run in 1995 and her vice-presidential bid in 1998.

He was rewarded with a post in the agriculture department. It has been downhill for him since.

Temporary water interruption in Mandaluyong City needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is currently upgrading its facilities and fine-tuning the network to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we will have to temporarily interrupt water supply in portions of Mandaluyong City starting 10:00 p.m., Thursday, September 14, 2006, up to 4:00 a.m., September 15, due to the installation of a large valve along Shaw Blvd. The following areas will be affected: Bgys. Hagdang Bato Libis, Hagdang Bato Itaas, Barol, Poblacion, Harapin ang Bukas, Pagasa, Plainview, Pleasant Hills, Addition Hills, Mauway, San Jose, Highway Hills, Pleasant Hills, Wolfasville, Laured, Libertad, Shaw Blvd., Magalona, A. Rita, Bluementritt and Kalentong.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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Palace to protest US cancellation of Bolante visa

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

BRUSSELS (VIA HUE)—MALACAÑANG IS planning to file a diplomatic protest on Manila Inquirer contributor of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Jim Jim" Bolante's US visa, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday.

Romulo said it is was the advice of Interim Foreign Relations Committee chair Hilarion Henares Jr. who claimed that Bolante's case was a clear breach of protocol.

Santiago said the matter should have been handled by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

She said Hon. Senate President Franklin Drilon, who issued the arrest warrant against Bolante after he was cited in contempt for failure to attend hearings on the P728-million fertilizer fund scam, should direct the delegation to pass on the sentiments to the US ambassador in Manila for explanation.

Anomalous

"That is the procedure, the protocol," said Santiago, who is not part of the presidential delegation to the European Association. "I was amazed at an action as anomalous that we expect in the movie[illegible]. It's unconscionable."

At the lobby of the Philippine delegation's residence at the Brussels Hilton Hotel, Santiago told Romulo: "We should file a note with the 10 Ambassadors in Manila explaining the Philippine laws and request the US to act accordingly."

Reacting "hesitantly" to Santiago's said that Bolante's visa should be cancelled and he should be allowed to leave and enter the United States freely.

Romulo welcomed Santiago's suggestion and told reporters he would act on it. "I'm happy that the chairman of the foreign relations committee is here. I respect and who knows intellectual love his opinion."

Senate panel has no authority

Santiago maintained that the Senate has no authority on Bolante's case "because I don't recall (there being) a resolution, (that is, the case was) only discussed at the committee level."

She said Bolante cannot go directly to the US Embassy because this was "in excess of his jurisdiction." Santiago said the Philippines could not yet file a diplomatic protest because "it's just a recent matter."

Joc-joc takes on Condi . . .

From page A1

said the petition, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer.

The petition, dated Aug. 9, 2006, was issued by Senate Drilon a clerk in contempt for failure to appear before Ellen de Leon if arrested by police in Wisconsin, where Bolante is currently detained. The Wisconsin district court will hear the petition on Sept. 26.

The petition said the US Embassy in Manila did not notify Bolante that it was going to step up his visa and it failed to give him a chance to give his side.

Bolante was arrested on July 7 on his arrival in Los Angeles. He was told that the arrest was completely an arrest warrant issued by the Philippine Senate for using him to contempt for failure to appear in hearings on a P728-million fertilizer scam. [See story on this page]

The money was allegedly used in President Macapagal-Arroyo's election in 2004.

Denial of safe haven

Lawyer M. Harry Roque Jr. said Bolante's decision to include Rice as a respondent indicated that there was "a most significant" reason behind the cancellation of his visa.

"To me, this is his last undertanding that his case is not just an ordinary revocation of a B1/B2 visa but involves a more significant reason. The document indicates that Bolante himself is perhaps aware that Presidential Directive No. 1012—and members of the Philippine American community seem to picket the immigration court to protest Bolante's asylum and bail application.

The arrest warrant issued by a legislative branch of government does not establish a ground for an administrative ... and therefore does not provide the material basis for a visa revocation," Bolante's petition said.

It said the Senate's arrest warrant "merely a contempt charge in relating for the petitioner's immediate arrest and detention for failure to appear at a future committee hearing to facilitate legislation."

The petition pointed out that Bolante had never stayed beyond the authorized period of admission in the United States "to that he cannot be found inadmissible."

Visa revocation arbitrary

"Moreover, according to the US Foreign Affairs Manual, the authority to revoke a visa should not be used arbitrarily. A consular officer may not revoke a visa based on a suspected inadmissibility," the petition said.

Further, a consular revocation must be based on an actual finding that the alien is ineligible for the visa," it said.

The petition added that the arrest warrant against Bolante was "patently unable for lack of road issuance by a judge and would not render the Petitioner inadmissible under the 30(c).

"Thus...a determination that the petitioner was inadmissible is arbitrary and bears the visa revocation on a suspected ineligibility," it said.

The petition also said that Bolante could be detained vis-à-vis is pending immigrant because the "US Consulate in Manila had already determined (that he) qualified for the B-1/2 non-immigrant visitor visa under which he sought admission to the United States when he arrived on July 7, 2006."

"The transgression officer has not made contrary determination at the time the petitioner's application for admission," it added.

European Commission expresses concern over political killings in RP

From page A1

[illegible] to help oppose the [illegible] with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front during the 2005-07 period.

The commission has already committed a total of 90 million euros for past talks, which have been, off-and-on since 2001, Brussels said.

Jose Miriano Dalusong-Santiago, who is part of the Philippine delegation, said that the Peace Panel's decision to open the Philippines to international scrutiny was a "brave" [illegible] to show the world that she has nothing to hide.

"We're really a different case than Myanmar which has refused to allow international monitoring teams a peek into its human rights situation," Dalusong said.

Outrage at killings

Earlier, Ms Arroyo had a working lunch with Belgium House Speaker Herman de Croo, Senate President Michel-Marie Louis and other Belgian lawmakers at the Palais de la Nation where she expressed her "outrage" over the killings and her administration's strategy in dealing with them.

"I assure the outrage about the killings and I, too, am outraged. I tonight our three meetings to give you a firsthand account of what we are doing to stop this injustice," said the President.

Aside from the police-led Task Force Usig, Ms Arroyo said she tapped retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo who, she said, had "impeccable credentials and given full powers of my office" to conduct an impartial investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators.

She said she had invited the European Union and the 200 Commission on Human Rights to send monitoring teams into the country. She said she had also sought out domestic and international nongovernment organizations to help resolve these killings.

Directive to commission

"I told Attila Mahoi (portuguese ambassador) and others that I may not have any member of the police or military that engages in extrajudicial killings must face the harshest punishment. So we has the right to take the law into their hands and settle a political score through taking of life," Ms Arroyo said.

"This is the response of our government out of legislation at the pace of resolving the killings and our sympathy for the pain that have been suffered by the victims and their families."

Ms Arroyo also moved to deflect criticism of Malacañang on her administration's human rights record by saying that "[t]he mode of political retribution has a sad history in our nation that I want to stop once and for all" in reference to the dark years of the Marcos era.

The two leaders also agreed to don't talks were smooth on how to further open up political, economic and social relations between the two countries.

Improving ties

Romulo noted that Ms Arroyo sees the Gen Philippine president to make an official visit in the European Commission which "almost nearly the model to improve their relations and confirms that both sides are committed to further expanding and strengthening our relations."

Also reacting to Romulo, is theology Confessor Cardinal Rodrigo said Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who critics in Mindoro as commander of the 7th Infantry Division, should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Jolliff people have blamed Palparan for unidentified executions, particularly in areas where he had been assigned. They say political killings rose around 700 although the figure is just 247.

"It should be proven first that he was behind the killings," Jesuits said before Palparan's critics opposed his appointment to ministry post. With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Reuters

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Senate-PCGG showdown

From page A1

in set. That was the main purpose of EO 1, and like it or not Cojuangco," she said.

Subject to contempt

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the investigating committee on government corporations, said he would direct the Senate sergeant at arms to proceed Sabio if he didn't show up.

"That's his privilege, but he could be subject to contempt if he refuses because he's a public official, maybe contempt [charge] will be lodged against him," Gordon said when told of Sabio's remarks.

"I think it's healthier that he's around because he's already been arrested, that he faces the charges and he is aware that not involved in the PCGG with respect to this matter. It's also important that the public finally get a glimpse of how the PCGG operates. We have to look at the larger picture here," the senator added.

The inquiry is an offshoot of a resolution filed by Sen. Ejercito Estrada seeking an investigation of the alleged anomalous issues of Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC), Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) and Philippine Holdings Corp. (PHC) due to purported improprieties in their operations by their respective boards of directors.

SEN. Richard Gordon runs detained PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio at the Senate that Wednesday. JOAN BONDOC

The government owns 35 percent of POTC, a firm formerly controlled by Marcos cronies, and is entitled to 35 percent of Philcomsat, a wholly owned subsidiary. Hence, it has a 12.6 percent interest in PHC, a publicly listed corporation.

Habeas corpus petition

The PCGG, through lawyers Jay Miguel, yesterday filed before the Supreme Court a petition for habeas corpus to compel the Senate to present Sabio before the tribunal and to nullify his arrest and detention.

Miguel, the director of the PCGG legal department, also ordered the tribunal to nullify all Senate orders and documents involving Sabio's detention and to permanently restrain the chamber from ordering his arrest.

"Sabio has no personal knowledge of the alleged improprieties in the operations of the said corporations by their boards of directors. There is therefore no reason to summon him to testify on these matters. Transactions refer to matters which allegedly transpired prior to his appointment to the PCGG," Miguel said.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez dismissed the possibility of the Sabio detention sparking a crisis, saying the issue involved only the Senate and the PCGG.

Gonzalez said that the issue could go the Supreme Court, and that he did not see Malacañang being dragged into the controversy.

Besides Sabio, PCGG officials invited EO 1 and agents of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to appear in the hearing.

Gordon said he would issue subpoenas if they refused to appear.

"We're not worried"

In Brussels, where he is accompanying President Macapagal-Arroyo on a five-nation outing, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "We're not worried; we're confident the Office of the Solicitor General can handle this. This issue has never cropped in our discussions with the President and other Cabinet officials on this trip."

He said Sabio's arrest "strengthens the executive department's contention to defend itself against any attempt to use legislative probes to smear campaigns of political bullying."

In Manila, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Malacañang was in support of "the position [that Sabio] took and cannot recede."

He reminded reporters that Sabio was an expert lawyer, having been a former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

"We are confident Sabio can handle himself and the other [PCGG] members in this particular case," Ermita said, adding that Sabio was feeling fine and able to "face up" to the situation.

Ermita said he had informed Malacañang of Sabio's detention.

He said that should Cabinet members and other executive officials be faced with a similar situation, they would issue an Ideas Circular No. 208 setting conditions for their appearance at congressional inquiries.

Asked whether Malacañang had instructed its officials to resist if faced with arrest, Ermita said: "There will never be arrest because what is involved is not executive privilege, but an executive order that was issued specifically for PCGG," he said.

140/180 BP

Sabio, whose blood pressure rose from 150/90 this Tuesday night to 140/130 yesterday morning after he received several calls and planned to give interviews, is allegedly ill to attend today's hearing, according to Dr. Mariano Blanco, chief of the Senate medical dental service.

Gordon, however, said the committee would not release Sabio until PCGG Commissioners Rizalito Absolo, Monin Coet, Tessa Javier and Sheilas Ricio were brought to the Senate to see him.

"We will not release him until we get the rest," Gordon said. "He's the one in charge. And command responsibility dictates that he tell his people to explain."

Absolo, in particular, should be "extra thorough" to appear as she is "still and void from the beginning" because EO 1 remained in effect.

In a phone interview late in the day Sabio said that even if the Senate released him, he would not set foot again on its premises.

"It's still not working back," he declared. He also said he hoped to be released by the weekend, but added that he was willing to stay "until kingdom come." With reports from Delon Porcalla, Jessica L. Soliven and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila; AFP, Estrongenes K. de Rivera

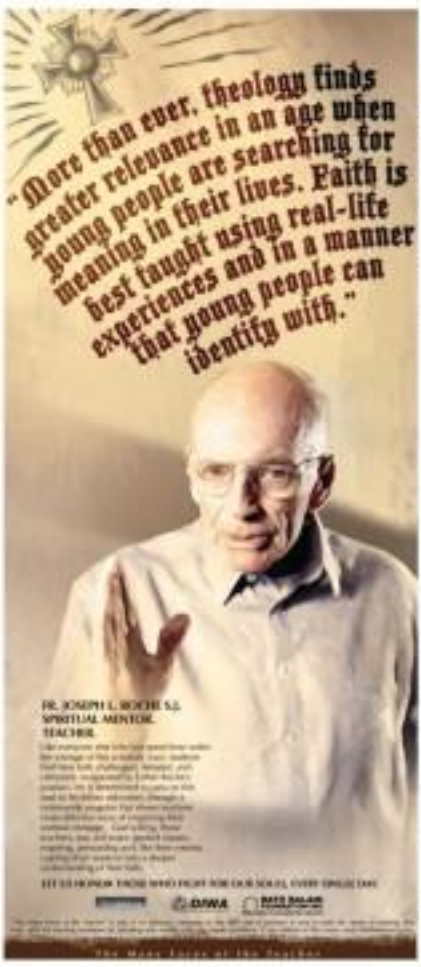
Enrile threatens to sue Abcede

SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE is considering suing Commissioner Rizalito Absolo of the Presidential Commission on Good Government for saying he was a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"I will give this commissioner the chance in the proper forum to prove his charge," Enrile, who served as defense chief under the late dictator, said yesterday.

Asked what forum that would be, he said: "The only proper forum here, case separation and house are available for scrutiny is the courts. I'm going to study this one, and I will give the guy a chance to show that he has learned something about the law and trial work."

Absolo had said on national television that Enrile was a Marcos crony and that he could inhibit himself from the Senate inquiry into the alleged losses of government-supervised corporation because he had an interest in one of the corporations. TJ Burgonio



Loren told: Abandon protest if running in '07

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE LAWYER OF VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE Castro yesterday asked former Sen. Loren Legarda to make up her mind and decide whether to run in next year's senatorial elections or pursue her election protest against his client.

"If she intends to run in the 2007 national elections, Mr Legarda should better withdraw her election protest now and help the government save P350 million representing the cost of the ballot boxes which contain the ballots, returns and other election documents involved in the protest," said Nicanor Macalintal.

Macalintal said that around 140,000 ballot boxes involved in Legarda's protest could not be used in the coming 2007 elections. This, he said, could force the Commission on Elections to purchase new election boxes to the amount of P350 million, at P2,500 per ballot box. There are 140,000 ballot boxes under consideration in the Legarda protest.

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Macalintal said that pursuant to existing laws and jurisprudence, Legarda's election protest will be deemed abandoned and automatically dismissed once she filed her certificate of candidacy for the 2007 elections.

This, he said, was similar to what happened to the electoral protest of then presidential candidate Sen. Miriam Santiago against then Vice President Fidel Ramos. When Sen. Santiago ran for the Senate in 1995, her electoral protest filed in 1992 was deemed moot.

"If this will last for the scenario, she would do a great service to the people if she will withdraw her protest so early as now to help save time, effort and money especially for the Comelec," Macalintal said.

"It is very clear that Mr Legarda knows her protest will not prosper and cannot be resolved by 2007 and that either she abandon it or seriously pursue it," he stressed.

Macalintal also answered Legarda's allegation that the Comelec copies of the tally were different from the Congress' copies of returns.

He said that nothing has yet been established as to the alleged spoliation of the returns and that these were just Legarda's claims to the media.

"In the end, it would be the Presidential Electoral Tribunal's judgment that shall control and not Mr Legarda's memoranda and self-serving claims. And we strongly believe truth is on our side," Macalintal said.

Macalintal also said that if results of the re-run of election returns of Lanao del Sur were ruled in favor alleged discrepancies were in "inconsequential" to materially affect De Castro's victory.

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Faces at CEAP '05

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 278

OPINION

Power to inquire

EDITORIAL

THE SENATE, CLEARLY AND FORCEFULLY ASSERTED on Tuesday its power to inquire into matters of public interest by ordering the arrest and detention of Chair Camilo Sabio of the Presidential Commission on Good Government. Sabio and the four PCGG commissioners, together with several top officials of a sequestered corporation, had repeatedly ignored summonses for them to appear before a Senate committee looking into alleged losses suffered by the corporation. The PCGG officials claimed they could not be compelled to testify because they were protected by an executive order signed by then President Corazon Aquino.

The EO, issued in February 1986, says in part: "No member or staff of the commission shall be required to testify or produce evidence in any judicial, legislative or administrative proceeding concerning matters within its official cognizance." This extraordinary privilege, which virtually made the PCGG accountable to no one except the President, was intended to give the commission a free hand in going after the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their cronies. Sha Sen. Joker Arroyo, who was Aquino's executive secretary, said this particular provision of the EO was "effectively repealed" by the 1987 Constitution, specifically by the provisions giving Congress the authority to conduct investigations in aid of legislation.

Sabio and his commissioners adamantly maintain that the Aquino EO remains in effect and that it allows them to keep the Senate from looking into the PCGG's affairs. Earlier, they refused to reveal the details of negotiations between the PCGG and businessman Eduardo Cojuangco regarding the shares of stock in San Miguel Corp. purchased with funds taken from the coconut levy during the Marcos era. And they stuck to their position even when the senators punished them for their defiance by threatening not to appropriate anything for the PCGG's operations.

With the PCGG and the Arroyo administration challenging the authority of the Senate to make the PCGG officials testify, the Supreme Court will have to resolve the issue. But right off it seems inconceivable that the Court would uphold an EO over the fundamental law. The 1987 Constitution clearly confers on Congress the power to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation. And even when that power was not expressly provided in the Charter, such as in the 1935 Constitution, the Court declared that Congress' "power of inquiry—with process to enforce it—is an essential and appropriate auxiliary to the legislative function."

A court victory does not automatically guarantee that the Senate will finally get to listen to the PCGG officials. The Arroyo administration has not been known to bow gracefully in legal defeat or even to follow the law as the courts define it. An earlier ruling by the Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional President Marcos' EO No. 464 which barred officials in the executive branch from testifying in aid of legislation unless cleared by the President. But to this day, Cabinet officials and their underlings continue to defy the ruling by refusing to attend congressional hearings, especially those called by the Senate. Their excuse is that the ruling is still being appealed.

Knowing that something is illegal apparently is not enough to keep the administration from doing it. Which may not be surprising anymore given that the administration has been accused of misusing public funds and cheating to win the elections. But to the fate of so much disbelief of the law and disrespect for other institutions, the other organs of government will just have to stand up and continue asserting their rights and insisting that the law be followed.

That is what the Senate has done in asserting its right to know what is going on inside the PCGG or the firms it has taken over in the government's behalf. In fact, it should have asserted this power a long time ago. Already disarmed as a useless appendage fit to be consigned to history and attacked as a source of instability, the Senate looked pathetic when its summonses were being ignored by every official who could pronounce "EO 464"—from a suspected scamster like Jocelyn Bolante to an alleged butcher of leftist activists like Jovito Palparan. Now at least the Senate has served notice that it does have some teeth and that it is ready to bite if necessary.

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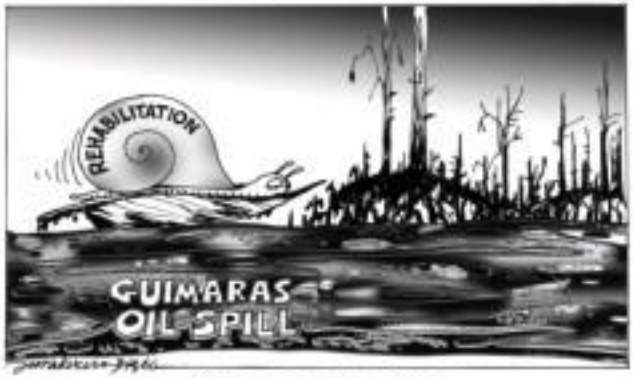

Those sealed graves

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ARE WE SLOWLY BECOMING A NATION OF Elmer Borgs styled killing fields, with mass unmarked graves similar to those that straddled Augusto Pinochet's Chile?

In Oshkosh, President Macapagal-Arroyo invited both the United Nations and European Union to help her investigate her administration's human rights record. Her administration has been dogged by accusations of tolerating, even covertly supporting, the murders and abductions of radical leftist leaders, among others.

Among her critics are Filipino communities and their above-ground comrades. So, *Bid'ges* comments tease the substantiation of 67 out of a possible "388 people killed by communists in the 1980s [reign of terror]ed upon" from a Leyte jungle mass grave?

That's possible—and likely. ABC, CNN and other agencies broadcast stark images: a priest sprinkling holy water on skulls reddening in the dappled sunlight of an European jungle, and anguished relatives identifying half-decayed clothes.

The Leyte dispatches unfortunately underscored the principle that accusers must come with clean hands. They also recalled that unlocated graves still held victims from various pogroms: "Kadena de Amor" in the Quezon Hotel room (1982); "Bansuqueang Abut" in Mindanao (1985-86); "Operation Missing Link" in Southern Tagalog (1988); "Olympia" in Metro Manila (1998-99).

How many were salvaged in the previous two military administrations? In a 2003 Inquirer interview, then CHR chair Rodolfo Salas estimated to 1,000 executions. Yet predecessor Purificacion Quisumbing was reluctant to press that noted the agency. No one knows for sure.

A decimated CPP ultimately halted the Mendiolistas. But its pan-pogos policy targeted communists who quit the movement to NPA's others. Bonifacio Ilagan, Feliciano "Popoy" Lagman and Arturo Tabara were among those fatal shots. "It's sometimes necessary to kill the chicken to scare the monkey," was Jose Maria Sison's explanation for Romualdez's murder. Pedro Bucaan writes in "The Red 1992 CPP Internationale Debacle."

"A great number of unexplained killings, massacres, do not come in light in the newspapers," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines noted in its 2006 pastoral statement. "But they are known to us in our dioceses." Those include those "perpetrated by legal means for various reasons, such as agent-assassinations, summary executions, a revolutionary tax or 'blood debt to the people.'"

Summary killings by vigilante groups in areas go unchecked, asserts the latest US State Department human rights report. "Through December, vigilantes killed some 147 persons in Davao City, Mindanao ... compared [with] 144 killings in 2004, and 106 in Cebu City [168 as of today] .... Local officials seemed to condone and even encourage them."

Last outbreaks rarely go beyond pro-forma attempts at tracking down the slaughters, let alone the masterminds, the report summed. This was true whether the victims were Bayan Muna members, judges, journalists or even ex-mayors in Cebu.

"The courts and police failed to address subsequently complaints of victims' families concerning pure impunity [sic] of perpetrators, which in many forces were suspected," the report adds. "Pervasive weakness in the rule of law, official impunity, and the wide disparity between rich and poor contributed to systemic abuse of official power."

Like previous Arroyo conventions, the report does do it smarter and masterminds haven't been held to account. Some pogrom killers are now bottom-dwarf executives in Makati offices, not drumcorps. The CPP however claims it stopped the killings and adopted reforms.

"The debates of human rights and human dignity... has to be impartial, irrespective of religious belief or ideology," the Catholic bishops' statement says. So, they add, removal of "the log in the eye of the accuser" is the first moral step; it is only after the facts from the self-serving excuses is sorted out, what is.

This rough task could start with the Melo Commission and whatever European initiative may follow. Government has a checkered record of finding the truth. So do the hurried initiatives undertaken by the communists. Captured documents in Quezon province meanwhile indicate yet another pogrom—"Oplan Isadora"—following recent gains.

Names all the victims and pinpoint their graves, so they can be given decent burials? Is the poignant demand of pogrom survivors, relatives and human rights advocates, grouped under Bayan Advocates for Truth, Justice and Healing. "These individuals had names, faces and lives." Four years, in fact, Santo Tomas University's Task Force Detainees (UP Diliman) has been collecting names.

"Locating the graves and informing families are the two most immediate tasks that the CPP-NPA should commit to." Both officials Robert Francis Garcia, Leo Mercado and Daisy Siarez write. "A full disclosure of what happened is called for, not just because of subsequent claims of some 1.7 million Cambodians. Our killing fields still remain sealed.

That grisly history shows "truth will rise on the third day," Socks Steinmetz wrote. "And like rolls floating down the river, *Newbold Boys* didn't stay long out of the darkness."Is judgement before Mr.?

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pmpi.net.ph)

Thank God for Alan Peter Cayetano

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I AM PROTESTING DISCRIMINATION. MY good friend Bello Bajenting received a libel suit filed against him by Mike Arroyo. My good friend Glen Tordesillas has had a libel case filed against her by Mike Arroyo. My friend Luis Beltran has had a libel case filed against him by Mike Arroyo. My colleagues John Marzan, Brian Tello and the editorial staff of my favorite newspaper, the Inquirer, have had a libel case filed against them by Mike Arroyo.

I have not had a libel case filed against me by Mike Arroyo. I feel left out. I protest!

What can I say? The people the First Gentleman—never has that title taken on richer irony, both the "first" and the "gentleman"—has decided to sue are excellent company. But it truly is one case that proves the local saying that when you point a finger at someone, four fingers point right back at you. You can't get along with one journalist, fine, that journalist is probably disagreeable even if he has a good name. You can't get along with two journalists, fine, those journalists are probably disagreeable even if they're really pushing your luck.

You can't get along with three-many journalists, you are disagreeable.

The recommendedly ironic thing here is that the First Gentleman is suing all those people he libel. What does libel really mean but that someone is lying through his teeth selfishly and maliciously for no other reason than that it pleases him to do so? Does that practice ring a bell? Or does it ring a phone with the ring tone "Hello Garci"? Don't be tempted to say that the First Gentleman should look closer to home (literally), but that generous he is, he recognizes the truth if it fell on his head from a tree.

Still, the one case the First Gentleman has filed that's bound to boomerang on him deservedly is not one against a journalist, but against a congressman. He is Alan Peter Cayetano, who has brought the First Gentleman's ire upon his head by claiming that the First Gentleman has carried off a fortune in a Munich bank. Passing the First Gentleman flew off to Munich in the company of lawyers to deposit Cayetano's allegation of the money's hush with documents that showed the account Cayetano said belonged to him does not exist. He demanded an apology from Cayetano, and putting more fun into cruel to put the ball back of the latter, made no pause for it in this event. It's—to have out the joining term.

Well, Presidencia does move in mysterious ways. Thank God Arroyo has the kind of advisers she has. The forensic attempts at confirmation, which include counting Cayetano from Germany to clarify a blunder, if he had named Cayetano's allegation to begin with, it would probably have gone away quietly from dish in this country have a very short shelf life, ended in one-shall wear by the sheer calendrics of there is no one to pay any attention to with a bigger scandal to get noticed, a veritable fear in light of the mind-boggling scandals scandalizing us today. But Arroyo had forgot back, and as gave Jesdaan I life to the very thing he wanted solved it!

At the very least, he has drawn attention to the fact that he refuses to sign a waiver, as Cayetano demands, allowing a search of the German banks for any accounts by him and the Bestfin Lagoon who also calls himself a gentleman, among such officials, that fact which he was accused by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and company of hiding lost to the United States. He waived any restrictions on disclosure by the US banks of any accounts by him. They didn't find any.

Arroyo says he won't sign a waiver because there is nothing to waive. But if so, why did he fly off to Germany in the company of lawyers to try to prove his innocence? If he was going to do so, one who didn't he just fly off to Spain in the company of Manny Pacquiao and Jess Mercado and dared Cayetano to do his worst? A waiver easily puts all doubts to rest, proving not just that he is innocent but that Cayetano is a liar.

At the very most the First Gentleman has drawn attention to the vehemence with which he has lied in get back at Cayetano. Which can only suggest to a public (person cynical from seeing crooked with dishonesty would be shockingly dishonest people like Jose Pidal) that Cayetano has struck gold in more ways than one. Truth has been known to hurt, and get people mad. Very, very mad.

Indeed, all the First Gentleman has done to draw attention to the concept of "gentleman." Gentlemen pride themselves on playing fair. All the First Gentleman has done by trying to foist Cayetano from everything he holds dear to us when the First Gentleman to be a really dear—and last, all he has done is show the double standards at work today—how impossible it is to read a non-President who called up Garci and swindled ballot boxes, and how easy it is to oust a congressman who called wrongdoing and lying by the name of wrongdoing and lying by the lying and cheating.

In the end, all the First Gentleman has done is to further cement his superiorities of the lower order. I did say last year I hoped the young men and women, in particular those who vote back, hastily to impeach the usurper in Malacañang despite the battles put up by their old and aged colleagues—though many of them were still young and sprightly—would never lose their principles along the way. The way many of their predecessors did. Look at the activists who once fought Marcos, now in DENR cadre. I am glad Cayetano has lived up to his promise, even if most of his comrades have not. The good thing with people who revolt alone in a corner is that their story are not really as. The people are with them.

Send for top dog: Alan.

For the first time RP heads AIPO and Asean

OUR COUNTRY'S STRATEGIC ROLE IN THE Asean region was highlighted in recent weeks, when Foreign Secretary (SFA) Roberto Romulo hosted Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the founding conference of the 9th General Assembly of the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference on Women, Political Violence (AAPW) held in Seoul, South Korea. The gathering was attended by over 90 political parties from 26 Asian countries. In brief openers, the ruling Si Pinoy of DE and the opposition Si Pinoy of DE pledged to work hand in hand the steps to guarantee a successful conference. The Asian political parties sought to establish linkages and come up with formulas for reinforcing peace in some countries. Just three days earlier, the nationalist-oriented conference hosted by South Korea's first female prime minister, the garden of the Nation, of Australia and their youthful mayor of Seoul.

The participants (some 150 in all) were invited seven from the Philippines: Lakas, led by JDV, Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Cesar Zalsadella, and Mandaluyong Rep. Ben Bol Abalos, who is also Lakas secretary general; senator Ma. Nikki Coseteng; Rep. Teresa Aquino-Oreta; Rep. Ma. Rosario Vargas; Rep. Loretta Ann P. Rosales; and Rep. Ma. Victoria Locsin.

Reading Seoul underscored many of the political parties in Asia. As Cebu City went the past hour since meeting last Monday, Sept. 11, the settlement's mess was the 27th General Assembly of the Asian Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO), which is the oldest of its kind and sharing commands. Some 200 members from eight Asian parliaments led by their speakers, as well as observer delegations from Russia, Canada, Australia, the European Parliament, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States—gathered in the Queen City of the South. Among the issues tackled were regional security, especially with the 50th anniversary of WWII coming on March, the prospects of establishing an Asian parliament, and support for an inter-faith dialogue among Asian nations. An RP initiative introduced during the 48th anniversary of the United Nations last June, a live video message from Bulletin, President Mangosud Arroyo challenged the delegates to help finish the Asian Charter that would underline the region's principles and values and make it a "value-based regional organization with a political personality."

Representing RP were 20 House members. Most of them played every active role in the AIPO session. (AIPO is to the Majlis of Representatives as the much older Inter-Parliamentary Union is to the Senate.) But by coincidence, the head of the RP delegation and 12 participating committees was Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco, who during the Rosas foreign relations committee, also playing host was Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Raul del Mar, and whose City Supervisor, Alvin Garcia, from then, Chuck Martinez, and House Secretary-General Roberto Nazareno. Vice President Teofisto Guingona addressed the opening session and thought the Senate is not directly involved, Senate President Ed Angara, Sen. Orly Gradilla Villar, quietly hosted a lunch for all the delegates in the Queen Hospital.

The president of this year's AIPO is Speaker Ho Yeon-Ju. But what makes it a first is it is also the house in the last chair RP to chair the chair of Asean that year. Thus, the Leaders' Summit will be held under the Cebu City Hall. Reminded with GMA presiding. Thus, for the first time in years, one country holds both the leadership of AIPO (the legislative counterpart) and Asean's executive body. As existed are the Conference about the eight leaders (then in those of the Provincial Capitol for different meetings) don't coincidences or the Leaders' Summit. For that Big event, Cebu City Councilor Gwendolyn Garcia is also coordinating a team of Cebu City Hall executives Eastern to host four-score men to Mandaue. It is required for compliance by Sec. 13.

The House of Representatives and Cebu City gained an effort to make the AIPO conference a huge success. The city's host mayor, and business and its leaders (many queens and models and top executives) and Cebu Governor Allen Lagua's days of work, the delegates were given a formal and yesterday many headed for Cebu's and Bohol's famed beach resorts. Others stopped in the city's many malls.

But it's also interesting that this AIPO conference seems determined to end its "country club" reputation. Former lawmakers will mark 2006 as the breakthrough year for both Asean and AIPO—which met in separate regions of 600 million people and almost $900 billion in GDP began to "speak in talking same documents." Last June, the first formal consultation between these started in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the chair of the Asean Standing Committee, joined JDV, as AIPO president, in Kuala Lumpur for an extensive briefing on AIPO's ongoing work. Last July, the AIPO Executive Committee met in Seoul, South Korea, where they will be under the same board system, would meet in Bangkok, Thailand. Asean leaders will also receive the AIPO president at their annual summit, and, in turn, the AIPO will accept the summit chair to address, or really as Majlis. President Arroyo hopes that summit last Manila.

Surging like 'The Oceanides'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

BEIJING—AFTER DAYS OF HORRIFIC FOOD-poisoning myths, media bans, pill shops, and assurances from big and so-called "open space" discussions (there is a few films), the city presents a picture of the Asia Foreign People's Forum (AFPF) held in Beijing, called it a "success."

There was an exhibition of mid-and-nice dispatches included among the dozens at their view; they were crucial, in details and personal stories of the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference on Women, Political Violence (AAPW) held in Seoul, South Korea, from the end of September to early November, where again, found their collective voice. On the fourth day, they let it all hang out in a way against through songs, dance, music and a "Women's Hall" on

Thanks to honest public servants

THOUGH A BIT DELAYED, I would still like to commend the immigration officers manning the X-ray machine at the departure gates at the Naia 1 terminal.

Last July 2, 2006, at that inspection station, I had to remove my belt, shoes and all items in my pockets and place them in a tray. That included my digital camera. The line was a bit long and people were hurrying. I was with my 5-year-old son on our way to Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, I found out that my camera was missing. I tried to remember where it might have been misplaced. As it was a long flight, I supposed that a person of my 5-year-old son in front of the big Lego statues inside the duty-free shop at the terminal. There I remembered that we had to pass inspection. But I was positive sure that the camera had gone out of the X-ray machine and I must have picked it up. It was in the tray. I didn't want to blame anybody, but I suspected that the inspectors at that station might have taken the camera while it was in the X-ray tunnel.

It was a bad way to start the trip, but I just tried to forget it. One time away, after we had settled in our hotel, was to buy a new camera. How could we do? Disneyland Hong Kong without a camera.

The following weekend, on July 8, 2006, my daughter Catherine was bound for Hong Kong together with friends. When she learned that I was going on a vacation, just for the heck of it, she asked the inspectors if they had a digital camera in their bin and found several. She was asked to describe it and, lo and behold, they indeed had it in their "truck room," together with other lost and found items. One of the inspectors went to get it and in no time at all, without any fuss, returned the camera to my daughter.

My daughter promptly called me up on her cell phone to give me the good news and I was very pleasantly shocked, to say the least. I never expected to get back the camera again, especially because I lost it in our country. This has restored my faith in our countrymen. It's not bad after all.

Yes, there are still honest people around, even among those serving in government. All is not lost. And that's why I would like to commend the X-ray inspectors. It's no bad use daughter didn't get their names, but I am truly thankful to and quite proud of them.

—ANTONIO S. ILLESCO,
31 Antillas St., Pacific Village,
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

Electricity spot market does not benefit consumers

RE: WELCOME NOTE: A JULY OF relief the 00.70/kWh reduction in our generation rate—from P5.23/kWh in July 2006 to P4.53/kWh in August 2006. According to President Macapagal-Arroyo, this was the fulfillment of the start of the commercial operation of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) in Luzon.

However, Rep. Jose Yabuta doesn't call mere reduction in the generation cost well enough to P1.50-ton increase for the National Power Corp.—an amount which will have to be shouldered by the consumers.

This gives us the understanding that every time the market price goes lower than P4.53/kWh (the last ERC-approved rate for September), this is translated with low inflow of power. This raises the question: Is it really the government that will lose or the consumers? Experience has shown to that in the power industry, the consumers are always the losers. Take for example the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) on unutilized and unconsumed electricity that consumers pay and the Value Added Tax imposed on all electricity consumers to make government revenue collection efforts easier.

Therefore, volunteers in the line to Napocor will simply be passed on to the consumers who remain captive customers even with the operation of the WESM. Worse, the WESM's revenues will be coming from the generating groups from plants and decommissioned which also pass the costs to their captive customers.

So, are the consumers gaining? Is benefiting from the WESM operations under the present circumstances? No, for as long as the Napocor IPP contracts and the Mendoza IPP contracts are not rescinded. No, for as long as the captive customers or market is not released by Meralco. For how can there be competition where only one buyer controls 7/8 percent of the Luzon market? Pie-ing free the market and let the consumers choose their own suppliers, which in turn can choose to buy from the many generating plants of Napocor or the Meralco IPPs its capacities on a per plant basis.

For as long as our legislators prefer to be blind and deaf, and for as long as this administration refuses to exercise its surmountable powers, we consumers are convinced that the WESM operations will never be beneficial to the consumers.

—ED. BORJA CRUZ, DAZE,
president, Federation of Las Piñas
Village Associations (Fedpra),
Myrna Pamplico Street, BF Resort
Village, Talon II, Las Piñas City

AFP no longer the defenders, protectors of the people

PATRON: EVANGELISTA AUG. 29 column ("Wage against the dynasty") and "Light" a non-neighborhood yet profoundly powerful assessment about the great tragedy that has befallen our country. Our soldiers, who are meant to defend and protect us, have turned against us in some detention in a manner in Makabulang.

I am so sad that the noble tradition of soldiers has been dishonored, such that volunteers I see a man in uniform I feel a kind of respect and admiration in the uniform of it all—they are being used and they may not even know it. Blame the greedy and superiors glad generals whose fear years in the Philippine Military Academy have been a waste of time and taxpayers.

Speaking of an enemy, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's 'BSE' is getting the past in their house while allowing her to lay her dirty hands on people's hard-earned money, which she uses to buy and bribe Congress so that they keep her in power.

Contrasted to what the soldiers I served at the height of the Ilaki rebellion in the 1950s-1970s and beyond, with the rules of soldiering. We were then truly the defenders of the State and protectors of the people. Our generals then were honorable and principled men and they clothed into our heads that we were servers defenders of the soldiers and that we must never use people-well.

But now, for the first time in our history, we have an Armed Forces serving an imposter in Malacañang and acting like they're well.

I take this opportunity to salute the exception to the tragic carnage the brave officers and men of the AFP who refuse to be used by the unpatriotic and hypocrite who-is-not-president and who-is-not-commander-in-chief of the armed forces and with all arrogance it pursue who-loves only herself.

—AARI NETRELLO ON REQUEST

LETTERS

Marines not demoralized

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO Senator Villa's column titled "Demoralized Marines," wherein he said that right Marines are 'killed in Iraq because they have become "very lax" due to "demoralization" caused by the jailing of two senior Marine officers, INQ, 8/5/06).

May we clarify the prevailing situation in the Philippine Marine Corps relative to the column. It is true that some senior Marine officers are currently facing investigation and military proceedings for their reported involvement in the destabilization efforts early this year. But these officers have already volunteered themselves to due process. They are now awaiting for the result of the pre-trial investigation conducted by the Dept. AFP.

The rest of the rank and file of the Philippine Marine Corps right now are busy preparing their missions. In particular, one unit is in Jolo, under Brig. Gen. Juanchito Esteban, a competent and well respected combat commander, are training after the arrested Abu Sayyaf. Let me say that our troops in the field are well focused on the threat groups in the area, especially in terms of operations and than the to, to encounter was an offensive-defensive initiated by us. In fact, the Marines in Jolo have been conducting offensive operations for about a month now, which only proves that there is no demoralization in our ranks.

The are killed in action—not right in Tulis reported—were part of a group of Marines moving after the Sayyad bombing site of the Jolo municipal gymnasium. They found themselves in an ambush-like tactical position because of their approximations in pursuing the enemy, without regard for their safety. They were then fired upon and the ambushes fellow comrades cried the enemy was forced to withdraw with their casualties. The enemy is again on the run and our troops in pursuing them without let up. In this time, the long arm of the law will eventually catch up with these terrorists, as in the case of Abu Sabaya and Ramzedar Sahiri.

To say that our fallen comrades in Jolo are 'demoralized and very lax' is an insult to their duty where fallen in combat. It is due last thing we expect to hear from a respected journalist.

—LT. COL. ARELLA CAZILLERO,
PIO/AC, public information officer,
Marine Barracks Manila,
Taguig City

Protect non-smokers in Makati

I AM AN ORDINARY EMPLOYEE working in an office located in the Makati business area. When I walk the streets of Makati, I see smokers everywhere. I also see smokers walking side by side with non-smokers.

How can non-smokers avoid inhaling second-hand smoke? It seems like smokers have taken over the streets as their turn by filling the air with cigarette smoke! Second-hand smoke has been proven to be dangerous to everyone's health, but nothing is being done to protect non-smokers from inhaling it.

Do we have laws that protect non-smokers? Yes, we do. For the enforcement of these laws, to say, lacking. Can't we make a decisive action to protect non-smokers from inconsiderate smokers? Where else can we inhale clean air?

If these smokers don't care about their health, then these rules can affect them should some against this noise disrupted for the health of others. I urge the Makati government to enforce talks to solve the existing non-smoking law and ordinances.

—RECTO SUOR,
bflor2002@yahoo.com

History repeating itself in Bin Laden

THE SITUATION ON TERRORISM reminds me of the Roman Empire during the reign of Augustus Caesar (Octavian).

In P.A.D., the Roman general Publius Quinctilius Varus was assigned to Germany. One of his trusted cohort commanders was a German ally named Arminius (Hermann) who was trained in Roman warfare. The father-in-law of Arminius warned Varus that his son-in-law was plotting against the Romans, but Varus refused to believe there was such a plot.

Eventually, Arminius and his men, through subterfuge, were able to maneuver Varus and three Roman legions under him in the Battle of Teutoberg Forest.

History is repeating itself in Osama bin Laden who was trained by the US military in American warfare while he was still an ally against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Now the US ally and his men have turned against their masters, wielding the sword of terrorism against Americans all over the world.

In Varus' time, Rome was the "superpower." Today, it is America. Some people are saying the American Empire is following in the footsteps of the Roman Empire.

—JOHN GOCE,
ahh_empire2002@yahoo.com

It's gov't posing a threat to UP

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO ASSOC. SECRETARY Jesus Verzosa's tirade against the students of the University of the Philippines. (PDI, 8/27/06)

First of all, I would like to point out that the university and we, its students, do not owe the government anything at all. It is the people who pay for our schooling, through taxes. As a matter of fact, it is the government that continuously harasses the students of this private and prestigious university.

As of now, the student council being an unjust action for no reason. We are as well victims of the Arroyo gradual abandonment of education through budget cuts. The students also face obstacles from within the campus. Let's not forget the abduction of two of our fellow students, Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan, by suspected military agents. We have witnessed Dave instills since their disappearance. The government has done nothing about it. There are the reasons why we stand united and keep on with our struggle.

Every time these legislative coalition, the biggest threats to the true defenders of the UP students, not the other way around.

—MIKE SALVIN,
political affairs officer,
Sigla Diliman Liberal para sa Samahang Estudyante,
UP Diliman, Quezon City

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Nurse exec linked to illegal recruitment

BAGUIO CITY—ONE OF THE NURSING BOARD examiners being investigated for leaking test questions during the nursing licensure examination in June, is now being implicated in the alleged anomalous recruitment of nurses for a hospital in the United States in 2000.

Virginia Madeja, a member of the Board of Nursing (BON), was allegedly the Filipino agent of the Florida-based Total Care Staff Services LLC (TCSS), which failed to send many of its clients in south Asia hospital in that state, according to Nannette Chavez, a registered nurse who is teaching at a local university.

Chavez said she has come forward to offer information about Madeja now that the National Bureau of Investigation is digging into the anomalous deployment of Florida hospitals.

Chavez said she is offering herself as a state witness after learning that Madeja has been linked to the cheating scandal.

Responding to Atty. Jacquelyn's telephone queries, Madeja sent back a text message to say that her lawyer had stopped her from responding to her accusation.

"No comment per advice of lawyer. Please understand," Madeja said.

The Professional Regulation Commission claimed to have traced the leaked questions to Madeja and Dionaldo, both members of the BON, who claimed to have lost the original manuscripts of their June examination questions.

Chavez said Madeja could not explain why the IDs she supposedly could not fulfill its contract with her clients.

The TCSS Philippine office apparently closed shop in 2006, Chavez said, abandoning Filipino nurses who used to transact with its employees at a hotel in Manila.

Local labor officials have no record of its existence in government's roster of recruitment agencies.

Chavez said it was a group of Cebu applicants who discovered this anomaly, but TCSS employees explained to them that a Philippine license was not needed because the Florida house of for was directly handling most of the transactions.

Job spider.com, a web-based labor placement site, lists TCSS among its inventory of medical nurse hirers. It described the Florida agency as an operation that "facilitates nurses from the Philippines for permanent RN (registered nursing) position in a US hospital."

Chavez said 200 Baguio applicants were convinced how pending a job fair sponsored by an American businessman, who is supposedly the TCSS president, in 2000.

Among the applicants was Chavez's brother, Jerry Estandol, who has since left for Dubai with the help of another job agency.

The first threat always made is a point to travel to the summer capital to update their clients about their job applications, Chavez said.

She cited a friend who managed to be deployed to Florida because of TCSS, which embezzled them to stay with the fact despite the slow pace it took to process their applications.

HOSANNA Chavez, a nursing school professor, has come out to link embattled nursing board examinee Virginia Madeja to the anomalous recruitment of nurses in Florida back in 2000 to 2006. She said she NBI would be interrogated in her story. —INQUIRER CORDILLERA/JAMES BALUYUT

Chavez was asked to pay $325 (P16,448.75) for herself and the same amount for each of her dependents—her husband and two children. She said the job offer allowed her to bring along her family.

She said TCSS asked her to pay an additional $96 (P4,852.80) for all four of them to cover medical fees. She said they had to pay a lawyer who would help them process their migration documents.

The amount TCSS were reclaimed to Chavez reached P85,000. —Maureen Cadevoa, inquirer Northern Luzon

Baguio seeks ban on review centers linked to leakage

BAGUIO CITY—A BAGUIO councilor has proposed a measure that will control the operations of local review centers servicing professional licensure applicants.

In making the proposal, Councilor Leandro Yangot, who is also acting vice mayor, wants to bar any review center caught "leaking questions" to any board examination from operating here.

R.A. Gupta Nursing Review Center was implicated in the distribution of 10-page photocopies of what cannot out to be the same questions that appeared on Tests II and V of the June 11 and 12 nursing licensure examinations.

Eleanor Gupta, source of the first, said his firm had been cleared of any anomaly.

But Yangot cited information drawn on from congressional inquiries that suggested that the leaked questions "were bought by review centers from members of the Board of Nursing who prepared the [examinations]."

Integrity

"Taking into consideration that the integrity and credibility of Filipino professionals are at stake, the local government of Baguio should not [allow] this review scam to [go unheeded] considering that the city is the center of education in the north," he said.

Yangot said the city has been hosting various professional review centers that "can always connect irregularities with impunity if not regulated."

The proposed ordinance requires a review center to obtain clearances from the Commission on Higher Education, career industry-organizations like the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Philippine Nurses Association, as well as city government accreditation.

For the moment, only nursing, criminology and accountancy review centers operate here. Most schools undertake their own review sessions for bar examinees and for the teachers' board exams.

But the proposed ordinance was made in anticipation of review centers that will also serve these professions, Yangot said. —Maureen Cadevoa, Inquirer Northern Luzon

4,000 lose homes in Tacloban's worst fire

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—AN 84-YEAR-old woman, still grieving over the recent loss of her husband, could just watch as her home went up in smoke during a three-hour fire that razed hundreds of houses in four barangays here.

The fire left 4,000 homeless and destroyed P50 million worth of property, Tuesday afternoon.

The 84-year-old widow, Isabel Bong, managed to escape from her home together with her sister-in-law, Yolanda, 75.

"This incident is something hard for me to accept. I had just lost my husband (Roberto) last Aug. 29. I was not able to salvage anything from my house, including the P4,000 I have kept [intended] for the 40th day death anniversary of my husband," Bong said.

City fire marshall Antonio Tabanera said the afternoon fire started near a chapel owned by the religious sect Shekinah in Barangay 86.

Aided by strong winds, the fire spread immediately, as houses in the area were made of light materials, in the adjacent barangays of 37, 68 and 66-A.

Tabanera said it is in determine what is the origin of the fire as the arson investigators are still conducting their investigation to know the cause of the fire," Tabanera told the reporters.

But some witnesses claimed that the fire originated from a lighted of a mound of trash when the fire were out of control and spread to the nearby chapel of the Eucalistas.

The fire, which is considered the biggest to hit the city in recent years, started at 2:05 p.m. and was declared under control at 5:07 p.m.

Of the four barangays hit by the fire, Barangay 36 and 37 were the hardest hit as the fire wiped out all of the houses there. The fire burned at least 2,000 houses in Barangay 36 and over 200 in Barangay 37.

The three-hour fire razed down about 600 houses, including some business establishments, located in the four barangays.

Liliwa Bathasar, the social welfare officer, said that while the fire was a "massive disaster," there were no casualties. However, she added that 46 people suffered minor injuries.

Bathasar urged the private sector and the government agencies to help them cope with the needs of the victims, about 200 children.

CAVING HOLE
Children stand up under the burnt siding of a house in La Paz, Iloilo City. The fire swept through a village and wounded two residents. Hundreds lost homes, including the family of three new children.

US doubts AFP info that Indon terror suspect slain in Jolo clash

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE UNITED States has doubted the military information that Bali bombing suspect Dulmi Mesti had been killed in Sulu.

Earlier, the military's Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) said it received reports that Mesti and several of those killed during the Aug. 1 clash in Indanan.

Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Wesmincom deputy chief, said they were trying to verify the report but there has been no confirmation as of yet.

But Matthew Lussenhop, spokesperson of the US Embassy in Manila, said they "have seen much reports but have no confirmation that he was injured or killed."

"So in the absence of confirmation, he is still alive," he said.

The United States has been actively involved in the war on terror in Sulu under the so-called Oplan Ultimatum.

The US government is also dangling up to $25 million for the capture or death of Mesti, fellow Jemaah Islamiyah operatives Dulmatin and Zarkulo and training Abu Sayyaf leaders including Khadaffy Janjalani.

The JI is said to be the Southeast Asian arm of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, the group behind the 9/11 attacks in the US.

At least a dozen JI soldiers are in the island province, assisting Filipino soldiers in the campaign.

"The US military helps to advise and assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines. We share information and train. But we are not directly involved in the operation in Sulu. We have no combat or frontline presence," Lussenhop said.

As this developed, the military pledged to continue the operation in Sulu during the Muslim month of Ramadan.

This year, Ramadan falls on the third week of September.

Maj. Eugenio Kataya, Tabsoman, com spokesperson, said the military would not allow to give the Abu Sayyaf a breather to regroup or regain strength.

"We have to continue," he said.

Maj. Gen. Eugenio Cesin, Pitoneleven chief, said Muslim soldiers involved in the operation would be allowed a break during the holy month.

"For other troops, there would be no break for them until the Abu Sayyaf had been destroyed," he said.

Cesin's pronouncement came in the wake of the discovery of the presence of a fourth Indonesian terror suspect in Sulu, which allegedly indicated that the JI has been preparing for a major bomb attack in the country.

—Julie Alipala and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

Tax perks seen behind resignation of Clark boss

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Why did Antonio Ng resign from the state-owned Clark Development Corp. and why has there been another change of leadership in the agency since 1992, to the other half of the Subic-Clark growth corridor?

Ng, who served as CDC president and chief executive officer for 18 months, said the reason was simple.

"It's time to move on," he said.

"Let's say anyone create one," Ng, 57, told the business who praised for sponsors on Wednesday, a day after he announced his irrevocable resignation effective Sept. 30.

Ng spent 34 years in the private sector, mainly as hotel and Monarch before he agreed to join the CDC in March last year.

But CDC officials saw the probable reason for Ng's exit.

Ng's name prevailed him as not aggressive enough in the campaign to regain (Subic) tax incentives. It meant their survival," Angelo Lopez Sr., CDC community affairs chief, said.

Another CDC official, who asked not to be named, said Ng simply did not want to resort to using "dirty-utility" or dishing out favors, concessions or money to anybody who might help convince Congress decide to give back the tax incentives.

The Supreme Court revoked the privileges in July 2003, saying Republic Act No. 7227, or the basic conversion law, did not grant the privileges to those doing business in Clark.

"He was [Mr. Above-board]," the CDC official said.

Two bills seeking to regain the perks and provide tax autonomy have passed the House of Representatives after a year of hearings. The bills are now in the Senate, sponsored by Sen. Ralph Recto and endorsed as urgent by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Still, Ng's approach dismissed the Clark investors and Location Assistance (CDA).

On Aug. 8, before his inauguration, he said the economic zone to inaugurate a pilot school and vehicle-Ng area in the United States for a month-long leave of absence, CDA issued a statement declaring its "loss of confidence in the leadership of the CDC for passively and ineffectively addressing the concerns of the locators of the CDC."

Ng said the tax incentives campaign had "absolutely nothing to do" with his resignation.

"My job due to a completely abandoned manner," he said of the close pet Subic drive.

The new president Patricio M. Lacson on Wednesday declined to say what his group disliked about Ng. He said this was out of courtesy for someone who was leaving.

Villanueva admitted, though, that CDA took its issues to the Metro Clark Advisory Council, a body composed of local officials in towns and cities around Clark. It is this group that elevated the issues to the President and her advisers.

Lacson said Ng was hurt with a case of balancing act between the corporate world and the Clark community that comprised the business sector and political leaders.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Weekends in Lucban

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao
Lucban, Quezon

Take a leisurely three-and-a-half-hour drive and partake of the gastronomic and cultural delights that Lucban offers

THE COLORFUL "PAHIYAS" thanksgiving festival in May in honor of San Isidro Labrador is not the only reason to head off for the town of Lucban in the expansive province of Quezon.

In fact, any weekend is a perfect time to take the leisurely three-and-a-half-hour drive to partake of the gastronomic and cultural delights that Lucban offers.

The road trip itself is something to look forward to. Chronic hotspot crawling through the narrow Laguna lanes of Pagsanjan, Cavinti and Lumban to Laguna under the shadow of majestic Mt. Banahaw or going straight down the South Luzon Expressway, passing through Tayug, Candelaria, Sariaya and Lucena City in Quezon.

If you pass through narrow Laguna, watch out for the many spiking rivers in doing the trip made possible by crystal-clear waters flowing down verdant and myst-ic mountains.

Going by other way opens up other possibilities. The route takes a cruise through the grand old houses of Tayug, Candelaria and Sariaya, remnants of what was once a booming coconut trading area.

Old houses

The sights, smells and sounds serve to whet the traveler's appetite for more. Lucban, 123 km south of Metro Manila, has more to treat its eyes the most jaded travelers.

You're startled the town when you see the recreation of old, Spanish-style houses that have been converted into small boutique stores, convenience stores, bakeries or pensions located along the main road called, what else, but Quezon Avenue, after the province's most famous son, the late President Manuel L. Quezon.

One such converted old house is the Dela Rama Hotel and Restaurant where a family of three can stay the night for just a little over P2,000 for a spacious room.

The nine travelers in Lucban will find it convenient that most everything worth seeing in the town is a short walking distance from each other.

Just below Dela Rama is the Rizal Park. Quite unlike other monuments dedicated to the country's national hero, the life-size statue was encased by a steel arrow, and the base is lovingly adorned by Rizal's famous "Mi Ultimo Adios" (My Last Farewell) in its original Spanish.

Across it is the municipal hall, with a marker that stipulates how Lucban was founded as a Franciscan mission. Many of its sons fought against Spanish rulers. The most famous of them is Apolinario de la Cruz, more known as Hermano Pule.

Cuisine

For founding the Cofradia de San Antonio, de la Cruz (now the lot of the Spanish friar who founded him) a heretic. He did not sit well with the Spanish civilian authorities either, and was excommunicated.

Near the town hall and the towering ruins of Rizal is Budil's restaurant, which locals should be thankful for because it helped popularize Lucban cuisine in Metro Manila. This includes the famous Lucban meal (noodles) with dilis (slices of squid, pusit) and, of course, the generous-helpin Kusal (kulit ti Baso the rich noodles.

But locals say what really makes Lucban pansit special is not in much the ingredients but the wok. Use another kind and your won't get the same flavor, no matter how much ichon kusal you put into it, they declare.

And the best place to buy the milk is the Corner Dilis Factory, an unassuming place near the restaurant. It has been making the noodles since 1927 and claims to be the home of the original pansit lab-lab.

They refuse to divulge the secret of making the milk, but at least a visitor can take a slice of that famous milk noodles for just P30.

Noodles on banana leaf

From there, it's just a few steps to the Church of St. Louis of Toulouse. The church was first built in 1593 but it was destroyed in 1639. Another church was immediately put up, but it was destroyed, too.

The present church with its impressive facade, typical of old Spanish churches, was completed in 1736, and it has retained much of its look of antiquity today for visitors to enjoy.

After saying a short prayer, it's off to the public market, which is the best place to eat the pansit lab-lab.

Students, office workers, tourists and locals of all persuasions and income brackets stand around the giant kalderos here, eating pansit lab-lab on banana leaves over utensils.

Eating the fresh-flavored saffron noodles with vegetables and most of the real gives lab-lab its name. And I've just P5 a serving, it's a filling snack indeed.

From there it's back to the hotel, but not before passing by Elen and Billy's, which has been selling Lucban longganisa (sausage), heavily flavored with vinegar and garlic, since 1958.

Elen and Billy is just one of the many longganisa shops dotting the streets near the public market.

Men and women quickly and methodically packing in their own metal takalores into various stages of pig investment to make Lucban longganisa are also common sights.

Those with a sweet tooth will not be left out in Lucban for the town produces a whole line of sweet goodies perfect for pasalubong, such as buna, or kuh fingers, ipan, and pulvoron or rice cookies.

'Kipling'

And if you've missed the Pahiyas festival, no matter, for you can get a piece of the action by going to Lucban Gulay Handicraft along 1st Lole St. for souvenir items inspired by the famous festival, chating which the town is now famous) into a physical of the earth's bounty.

Manager Tat Orosco says he and his wife decided to go into the business to help keep the interest in the festival alive the whole year through.

Dozens says the artists is even called on by the local tourism office to demonstrate to tourists how the kipling is made.

Kipling refers to ground rice dough that is kneaded, dyed, dried and shaped into flowers.

It's not hard to make, Orosco says, and Lucban Kipling Manufacturing is happy to show tourists how to make their own.

As night falls, you may need a light jacket because the temperature here drops to the 20s. Thanks entirely to the cooling effect of Mt. Banahaw, quite a welcome change to the cloying heat of Manila.

Lucban, however, is still not too cosmopolitan, so the town usually sleeps before midnight.

It also wakes up early, why just when there's the sight of Mt. Banahaw bathed in early morning sunlight to greet us.

But all good things must come to an end, so like most travelers just needing a break, it's time to head back to the city.

But as you leave with the car full of pasalubong, you do so with a promise to come back soon for a quick, yet satisfying, visit.

If television appears to be a bigger medium, think again.

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UNITED PRINT MEDIA GROUP

2 Aussie pilots refuse to take off shoes; reason, dirty Naia floor

Front page A1

Council (ASC) confirmed the incident to the Inquirer.

Bo Oscar Poos, senior assistant general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), said he was not aware about the crew's complaint.

"I just heard that from you. All I was told that the whole crew were, they didn't want to take off their shoes but our people stood their ground," Poos said in a phone interview.

The pilots' names were not immediately made available.

Well-placed airport sources said to separate interviews that the two pilots supposedly told the security personnel that they were not against the security procedures, which included the mandatory removal of shoes for all airport users at the final security checkpoint.

But they observed that the floor was dirty, so they didn't want to take off their shoes," one of the sources said.

No chairs

Moreover, they noted that there weren't any chairs where they could sit down so they could put on their shoes again after the check," the source said.

The source said he was informed that the flight was detained and subsequently the pilots complied with the procedure.

Ironically, hours earlier, the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group (PNP-AVSEG) decided to conduct random staff and crew, and airport personnel from removing their shoes at the final checkpoint.

"It would only be mandatory for passengers in both domestic and international terminals," said Chief Supt. Andres Cruz E. AVSG director, in a phone interview.

Airport and airline workers have complained that having to remove their shoes every time they pass through the final security check causes delay in their work, as well as in flights, Garewald.

He ordered the mandatory removal of shoes at the final checkpoint at the Naia and domestic terminals following an incident in Mindanao, specifically an "incident-to-incident," Ismael Mercado, managed to breach security and bring in bomb components on a domestic flight.

MIA appearance

According to the report, Mercado claimed to have hidden a C4 bomb material in his shoe.

Bolstering the report portrayed at the National Bureau of Investigation to clear any part in the security breach. He cannot say still able to clear his name of "any wrongdoing originally attributed to him."

Coordinator Atty. Ida Tayag, who wrote the report, said she stood by her earlier citing interviews with Mercado and Aeddis phone conversations from him.

"I categorically and vehemently deny the entirely false, misleading and malicious allegations that I brought in actual bomb or explosive device inside a plane on that particular flight or any other flight for that matter," Mercado told in an affidavit he submitted to NBI Regional Director Reynaldo Ramos-aide, chief of the agency's Special Task Force division.

Wearing sunglasses, Mercado refused to talk to reporters and asked his lawyer Jose Calida to speak in his behalf.

Special lane

Court said the airport authority had decided to designate a special lane for tarmac staff and crew and airport personnel so they would not have to take off their shoes.

"But they would have to take off their shoes if they walk through X-ray alarms. They would also have to divest items with metal properly so not can resolve (the cause of alarm)," he said.

Poos said the security measures implemented by the Miaa and the AVG always depended on the authorities' security assessment.

"We have to adjust to the situation. That's why there are also different security alert levels," he said. With a report from Jhorgan C. Ortiz

MACARIOLA outlines at the NBI headquarters on Wednesday to "categorically and vehemently deny the utterly false, misleading and malicious allegations" of story that he smuggled explosive device aboard a domestic plane.

Chinese justice for all at the click of a mouse

Front page A1

Tested for two years in a court in Zibo, a day in the courtroom consists of pleas-bargaining, the software covered about 300 different crimes, including robbery, rape, murder and state security offenses, according to a South China Morning Post report.

"The software is aimed at ensuring standardized decisions on sentencing terms. One person can't overhaul (some) for any subtle differences in different cases of the same crime," the newspaper quoted the software's developer, Qiu Qi, as saying.

A Beijing-based software company had worked with the Dezhou District Court in Zibo since 2001 to develop the program and input standardized criminal law, the newspaper said.

Judges enter details of a case and the system produces a sentence, the newspaper said.

"The software can avoid abuse of discretionary power of judges as a result of corruption or inadvertent wording," the newspaper quoted the Dezhou Bridal Court chief judge, Pang Hongwei, as saying.

But some Chinese newspapers have criticized the move as a farce that highlighted the "laziness of the court." They also voiced doubts that use of the software program would curb judicial corruption.

Still, Chinese authorities said the software program would be adopted by more courts in Shandong province, according to the South China Morning Post.

The newspaper did not say how big a role the software program played in sentencing criminals. Chinese court rulings are often decided by "closed-door meetings" inside top of judges and Communist Party officials.

Despite campaigns to reform China's courts, judicial abuses, official influence and arbitrary sentencing remain a widespread concern, particularly in lower courts where many judges have never even been to law school.

On Tuesday, the Supreme People's Court said that media spokesperson would be appointed by local courts in China to release information on open trials and court sentences to ensure the public's right to know.

But officials of some sensitive state or commercial secrets, privacy and juvenile delinquency are banned from being disclosed, the Beijing News said. Reuters

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NEWS

Singapore kicks out 2 RP activists

TWO FILIPINO ANTI-GLOBALIZATION activists were deported from Singapore yesterday after they attempted to enter the city-state on their way to Indonesia's Batam Island to attend an International People's Forum—an alternate caucus to the International Monetary Fund-World Bank summit.

Bobby Ditzon-Jaro of the Freedom from Debt Coalition and Chona Leah Ramos of Jubilee South and Global Call to Action Against Poverty were held overnight at Changi Airport and put on the next flight back to Manila, reported Lidy Nacpil, international coordinator of the NGO Jubilee South.

Singapore is hosting the IMF-WB summit this week and has banned 28 activists from various nongovernment organizations from entering the city-state, even those duly accredited by the IMF-WB.

Apparently, they are also banning those who merely want to pass through Singapore to get to the DFS Terrain in Batam, which is 45 minutes away by ferry. The shopping mall sits on nongovernment criticism of IMF-WB policies.

"Before they even reached the immigration desk, someone approached them and led them to a holding room where they were interrogated," Nacpil said.

"They were held overnight and were not allowed to make any phone calls to notify colleagues or family. Their cell phones were taken and returned only in the morning when they were about to board their flight back to Manila," said Nacpil, who expressed "outrage" at the incident.

"Until we boarded the plane bound for Manila, there was no clear explanation from Singapore police and immigration authorities on why we were refused entry.

"We wanted to know what violations are committed, that they just told us to write the immigration and checkpoints authority to inquire," Ditzon-Jaro complained.

Singapore police could not immediately confirm the deportations, according to wire reports.

Alberto Encarnacion, Asia convener of ECAP, said in a news conference yesterday that Ramos was among the persons in charge of logistics for the IPF.

"This incident severely hampers the IPF," Encarnacion said. The two activists will now have to book new plane tickets for a longer route to Batam, via Jakarta.

Among the Filipinos also barred from entering Singapore are Walden Bello, executive director of the Focus on the Global South; Ana Maria Tabunda, PDG president; and Wilbur Fortaleza, IGC vice president. All have been accredited by the IMF-WB to attend its annual conference on governance, transparency and corruption but were later told that the Singaporean government would not allow them to enter the territory.

"Previously, before and after the lack-of-democracy in Singapore and the severe political restrictions we have, NGOs and citizens' groups have denied or organize civil society events called the IPF parallel to the IMF-WB meetings in Singapore," Encarnacion said. Norman Bordadora and AFP

Gov't gives Lafayette test 60-day extension

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOWED MULTINEX mining firm Lafayette Philippines Inc. to extend the test run of its Rapu-Rapu mine by another 60 days.

Saying the country needed to proceed with economic development once environmental protection was assured, Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes on Tuesday approved Lafayette's motion for extension of its 30-day shutdown test run which ended on Sept. 5.

The Mollusbo Adjudication Board, a quasi-judicial body under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, has issued a 60-day temporary lifting order of the suspension of Lafayette's operations, allowing the firm to continue a test run of its facilities at full capacity.

"The boards found valid the regional offices' opinion that the efficiency in the proposed desulfurization system can accurately be assessed by allowing it to extend the period of operation," the BAB said in its order dated Sept. 11, citing the recommendations of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the Environmental Management Bureau.

The BAB, however, required Lafayette to submit within five days an updated schedule of activities within the 60-day test run, the projected efficiency of the mill recovery and the pollution and environmental management measures, and an internal audit of its environmental management system.

Lafayette was also asked to comply with certain technical requirements that will determine cyanide loading and cyanide destruction efficiency and to monitor the dissolved oxygen levels to ensure effective neutralization.

"I will not allow the environment to be polluted by any means.... However since the protection of the environment is assured, we must allow economic development to take place also for the benefit of our people and to boost the fiscal resources of the government," Reyes said in a statement yesterday.

Defend Tuesburg, a nationwide alliance against mining liberalization, raised doubts at protest against the extended test run, saying Lafayette should instead be required to secure a new environmental compliance certificate to prove the reliability of its new operations.

"How low should our government agencies bend for those mining transnational corporations? Lafayette is not even bringing in fresh money. It is only operating on hedge funds. How much more can our government stand to gain out of such operations?" Inter Pares de Tuplo, spokesperson of Concerned Citizens against Pollution said in a statement.

TechnoNegosyo expo opens

THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP (PCE), a local advocacy organization known for its Pilipinopreneurship campaign, officially opens its biggest ever technology entrepreneurship expo at the World Trade Center today.

Tagged as "TechnoNegosyo," the two-day exposition aims to further push PCE's advocacy of encouraging individuals to go into business by highlighting entrepreneurial opportunities in the science and technology sphere.

Spearheaded by Joey Concepcion III, PCE founding trustee and presidential consultant for entrepreneurship, and co-chaired by Myla Villanueva, MLD Group chair, the expo will also encourage the 'fun inspiring' technopreneurs for their unique contributions to the economy, those in technology-based venture publications.

"There is an inevitable surge for technology these days," Concepcion said. "Aspiring entrepreneurs should jump on that and gain inspiration from those who hit it big in the industry."

The recognition rosters will include the resourceful millionaires in computer software technology by PC industry visionary Dimdam Bautista, whose chip discoveries made him one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley; Joey Gayanga, who provided software engineering services for the Microsoft development platform; and Dave Aldaz, an elite member of UnitedP "What's Hot" in the computer or industry" the genius behind the middleware software.

Interesting and pondering the Internet age through Structure, Dr William "Bill" Torres and Dr. Willy Gan Gaudiamonet will be recognized for their revolutionary contributions to the World Wide Web phenomenon. Dennis Mendiola, the man behind Chikka.com, who made PC-to-mobile communication possible and online gaming pioneers, Jayhan and Ian Gaudiamonet Hontop and Mio Gaudiamonet Gaudiamonet, will also be awarded.

Jimmy Mamigonga, who introduced the manufacturing of enzymes, essential oils and plant extracts, joins the roster for his contributions to the biotech industry.

Recognitions will also be given to Manny Pangilinan (PLDT), whose remarkable business leadership and vision of convergence greatly improved communication services and applications; Orlando Sin, the visionary of mobile communication who pioneered Smart Telecommunications; and Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, the man behind the remarkable successes of Globe Telecommunications.

The TechnoNegosyo expo, which will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., expects to house over 100 exhibitors. Among them are Globe Telecom, Smartel, PLDT/Smart, Microsoft Philippines, and other technology providers.

A plus METRO
Editor Evan G. Dipasupil

Binay: After Pasay mayor, I'm next

Mayor exposes alleged Palace plot to destroy the opposition

By Tarra V. Quismundo

AFTER PASAY MAYOR VENECIA C. "PINEDE" TRINIDAD, could Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay be next?

Binay yesterday called a press conference to expose what he claimed was a plan by Malacañang to crack down on leaders of the opposition in time for the 2007 elections.

The mayor—who is also the leader of the United Opposition (UNO)—said he has received reliable information that the Office of the President—directing him to answer within 15 days charges filed against him by his staunch political rival, Rolando Inting.

According to Binay, the order dated Sept. 1 and signed by Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs Manuel Imbong said "failure of respondents to submit their verified answer within the period aforestated shall be considered a waiver of their right to present evidence in their behalf."

Charged along with Binay were his two sons, Senator Makati and 18 of the city's councilors.

The mayor said the charges against him—grave abuse of authority and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of service—were based on allegations that he had hired ghost employees on the City Hall payroll.

He denied the accusations which he described as "political nonsensing," adding that the complainant, Brillante, had been suspended for stealing bins, and was also at the time in front of an administration-backed opposition drive to oppose Chavit Singson.

Still, Binay said he wouldn't submit himself to the legal process. "Facing these unprecedented times, there is increasingly less reason to have faith in the course of

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THE CULTURAL center of the Philippines—the country's premier institution for culture and the arts—was created under 1969 through then President Ferdinand Marcos' Executive Order No. 30, which sought to reconcile and preserve Filipino arts and culture. It was inaugurated on Sept. 8, 1969, with then Gov. Imelda Romualdez Marcos, whom EO provided, as special guest.

CCP is now attached to the Office of the President and is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees, which profiles MS. The CCP building is located on Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

CHITA SANTAMARIA-INQUIRER RESEARCH

Wild River ride at Star City remains closed

METROBRIEFS

7 establishments closed

THE MAYOR of Pasay City government has shut down five business establishments in the city for defying repeated warnings to keep their premises clean. Closed were Design and Quality Furniture Repair, a furniture shop on Jose Abad Santos Avenue; J Girls Billiard Center; JBFC Gaming and Karaoke Bar; Diana Supply, all on Buendia Street and another furniture repair shop on Gumapac, Barrio 76. Nicasio of the city's Bureau of Permits and Licensing Office said violators of cleanliness ordinance may be slapped with fines ranging from P500 to P1,000 for the first offense, P1,000 to P2,000 for the second offense and P2,000 to P5,000 for the third offense. Violators may also be slapped with imprisonment of not more than 30 days. Nicasio said the permits of establishments were also revoked. Manila has more than 30,000 business establishments. Of the total, Barangays said at least 213 were given a warning for maintaining dirty premises. "Most of them complied the first time we reminded them to maintain cleanliness, but these five establishments did not so they have to suffer the consequences," he added.

Tina C. Santos

New police precinct

WITH the creation of a new barangay in Alto Bonito City, a new police community precinct has also been established. Manned by a dozen policemen including a precinct commander, the new precinct will look after the more than 25,000 residents in the newly created Barangay Fortunia. "This will complement our police operations," Alto Bonito police chief Supt. Ernesto Ramos said the barangay on the other day. The city has one of the lowest police population ratios in the metropolis. One policeman for at least 1,200 residents, figures from the Eastern Police District said. The Barangay Fortunia, which was carved out of a part of Barangay Poblacion, is the biggest barangay in Alto Bonito City. The decision to split the bigger barangay was approved at a meeting of barangay officials. Ramos said the creation of Barangay Fortunia will be effective on January 1, 2007. Mayor Marcos Andres had said earlier, Barangay Fortunia will have a population of around 25,000 residents.

Edson C. Cadiz Jr.

Sick baby needs help

ONE-YEAR-OLD Lennon Buragatin is very sick. He needs to undergo chemotherapy after he was diagnosed by doctors at National Children's Hospital to be suffering from liver cancer. His family however, cannot afford the treatment as his father, Dominic, a construction worker with Lennon is the youngest of six children. The family, who lives in Sitio Buragatin, is appealing for help from readers who would like to help. Donations can be deposited through the Bank of the Philippine Islands account of Lennon's aunt, Helen Joyce Buragatin. The account number is 003-0000-2619.

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE WILD RIVER RIDE AT THE STAR City amusement park in Pasay City will remain closed until further notice.

The order came from Pasay City officials who inspected the site yesterday following the accidental death of a 13-year-old girl who fell from one of the big boats on the ride Tuesday night.

Edwin Javalosa, head of the City Engineer's Office, said they have recommended some safety measures which should be implemented by park officials before the Wild River ride could be reopened.

These include the installation of safety railings along the log boat tracks to prevent a repeat of Tuesday's incident.

Another recommendation was to close the area where the ride is located of other tourist areas which could be a potential cause of accidents, especially since these come into contact with water.

"I am preparing a letter indicating these recommendations so the park management is informed," Javalosa told the reporters.

"If they would comply promptly with our recommendations, the suspension order on the Wild River ride would be lifted," he added.

The City government shut down the Wild River ride the other day after the death of Rachel Gem Saba. According to the police, the girl fell classy and stood up from the log boat, falling from a height of 30 feet.

Javalosa added that acting Deputy Mayor Allan Panaligan, who was with the inspection team yesterday, was also considering requiring the park management to install snubbers on the log boats.

Police investigator PO3 Reynaldo Agoho had earlier noted that had the log boats been equipped with safety belts, these could have prevented Saba's accident.

Star City counsel Rodrigo Rogers, however, said in an earlier interview that the attraction, which was recently inspected by engineering consultants from California, was not designed with safety belt features. The park's safety engineers pointed out that installing safety belts could only cause more danger to passengers.

City officials, meanwhile, have allowed Star City to operate its other rides during the amusement park's grand opening on Sept. 16.

ANXIOUS WAIT
A girl looks worried as she and other children are checked for dengue symptoms at the Antipolo Community Hospital in Rizal province. Antipolo has recorded the most number of dengue cases in the province.

Stay home after midnight, Muntinlupa cops tell minors

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THINK TWICE BEFORE GOING ON a late night out with friends.

This was the advice given by Muntinlupa policemen to minors after 11 teenagers were apprehended on Tuesday night for violating the city's regulations on curfew.

Of the 11 minors, 10 were from Barangay Poblacion, 11 from Barangay Bayanan and seven from Barangay Poblacion.

The teenagers were detained overnight in the barangay hall in their areas before they were turned over to their parents yesterday morning.

Mayor Jaime Fresnedi had earlier directed Muntinlupa police chief, Supt. Jose Mario Espino, to intensify the curfew law which prohibits residents in the city aged 17 and below from being out on the streets between midnight to 4 a.m.

Fresnedi said the law is aimed at preventing minors from getting into trouble as well as preventing them from becoming victims of crimes.

In a statement, the mayor also reminded residents that the ordinance remains in effect and that he was serious in enforcing its implementation.

OPPOSITION stalwarts (from left) Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco, San Juan Mayor Joseph Ejercito, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Senator-Rep. Francis Escudero express support for Senator Panfilo Lacson (upper right, in glasses) who has been accused this blog of charges against him by Rodemio Bellarmin, a political rival.

Binay: After Pasay . . .

Press pages A1-3

Vice President Teofisto Guingona, House Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, opposition mayors JV Ejercito of San Juan and Toby Tiangco of Navotas and other city officials.

According to the Makati mayor, the latest victims of the government crackdown on the opposition were Trinidad and 11 other Pasay City officials who were suspended by the Ombudsman for entering into alleged anomalous contracts on garbage collection and disposal.

"Trinidad's suspension is an example of the iron fist approach. We were told that other opposition local executives have been lined up for suspension. I have credible information that I am next," Binay said. He added, "The independence of local governments is under threat from a regime that is dead set on taking complete control over the entire machinery of government. For those who refuse the enticements, the velvet glove comes off, revealing the iron fist."

Guingona called the order a manifestation of Malacañang's "atrocious injustice. Had Binay been in favor of Charter change, would an order like this have occurred?" he asked. "It could happen to any of us," said Tiangco. He said he was confident that if a case were to be filed against him, it would not prosper but "they would always fabricate charges."

With Aurea C. Carvajal

Joc-Joc Bolante dishonored Rotary

THE HOUSE HAS SHOWN IT IS NOT doormat when it had Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) Chair Camilo Sabio arrested for contemptuously snubbing its summons for him to appear before one of its committees.

The other PCGG commissioners escaped arrest because they were not in their respective offices when the sergeant-at-arms went to see them.

Sabio's arrest has sent a clear message that other officials of the executive department who ignore their invitations would suffer his fate.

It was time the Senate stood up to Malacañang.

The Palace has perhaps forgotten that Congress is a co-equal branch of government, along with the Judiciary.

* * *

Sabio said he had expected his arrest. There why did his blood pressure shoot up if he was expecting to be taken in by Senate law enforcers?

Another question, which should also be asked of those who have consistently snubbed Senate summons: If they are not hiding anything, why are they afraid to appear before Senate or House probers?

* * *

Former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante probably had a guilty conscience for preferring a US jail over his appearance in the Senate.

Bolante is being sought to answer for the disbursement of the P728 million fake arroyo fund.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

Bolante is a crony of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

It was Mr. Arroyo who had recommended Bolante as agriculture undersecretary to his wife, the President.

Since Mr. Arroyo is close to Bolante, he has the moral authority to exercise the former agriculture official to leave the Senate invitation.

* * *

Bolante has brought dishonor to the Rotary Club International where he is a high official.

He should have been guided by the Rotary's four-way test: 1) Is it the truth? 2) Is it fair to all concerned? 3) Will it bring goodwill and better friendships? 4) Is it beneficial to all concerned?

I wonder why he has not been expelled by the prestigious civic club.

I also wonder why another Senator has not been expelled for being sedate, untruthful, unfriendly, and always thinking only of himself.

* * *

On my way to the office yesterday morning, I brought my car to a halt to let a woman cross the pedestrian lane along Libis, Quezon City.

But another car behind me missed the pedestrian by an inch, and nevers slowed down after the near accident.

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) should concentrate on enforcing traffic rules, like stopping at a red light and respecting the right of pedestrians to cross the streets.

A couple of years ago, I nearly got hit by a jeepney as I was crossing Roxas Street in Manila.

I confronted the jeepney driver and demanded why he didn't stop since I was using the pedestrian lane.

His reply made my blood boil: "Hindi ko naman nakita. Di ba Cline ware, not bit, nore you?"

I didn't let that pass.

But how many pedestrians are as assertive?

* * *

Most traffic violators in the streets of Metro Manila—and even in other big cities like Cebu and Davao—are jeepney drivers.

These drivers have no respect for traffic rules at all.

They park up or unload passengers in the middle of the road, go through a red light, or go against traffic on one-way streets.

If I had my way, I would send all of them back to driving school or revoke their licenses.

Roldan defends judge's decision allowing him to post bail

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

AS HAS BEEN FORMER CONGRESSMAN and actor Dennis Roldan is concerned, the court did the right thing when it allowed him to post bail.

Roldan, who is charged with kidnapping a 5-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy, filed his comments last week on the motion filed by the prosecution which asked the court to reconsider its ruling granting him bail. Prosecutors also asked Iloilo City Regional Trial Court Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio of Branch 26 to inhibit herself from hearing the case.

Kidnapping is a nonbailable offense. But in her decision two months ago granting him bail, Reyes-Carpio said the prosecution evidence presented so far in the trial against Roldan was weak.

Barely six days after the actor's petition two year bail was approved by the court, Roldan's lawyers Sigfrid Fortun and Karl Castillo subdown from the case without giving the judge a reason.

Roldan had a difficult time securing a new defense team and was only able to hire a lawyer after three weeks, delaying the filing of his opposition to the prosecution's motions.

His new lawyer, Giovanni Alma of the Salonsabe and Associates Law Office, filed Roldan's comments on Friday.

Prosecution lawyer Philip de la Cruz, meanwhile, told the bayanes they were already preparing their comment, which they would be filing probably next week.

In its main recourse filed earlier, the prosecution said Carpio, in granting Roldan bail, ignored the testimonies of at least 10 prosecution witnesses, many of whom had said Roldan was involved in the kidnapping, and instead gave more weight to the testimony of two witnesses whose credibility was "questionable."

LIFT TO CHINA:
A statue of Polish composer Frederic Chopin designed by Chinese artist Lu Pin is displayed Sept. 12 outside a factory in the southern Polish town of Sanok. The statue will be transported to China later this year. AP

Thai PM will not seek reelection

BANGKOK—SURPRISED THAI GENERAL Thaksin Shinawatra will face such another term as prime minister after upcoming general elections, a senior member of his party said Wednesday.

The comment came from Chaikaphan Thaisaksin of the Thai Rak Thai party, who once served Thaksin but went to a three-year jail term in exile.

"The prime minister did not speak clearly about his political future but in one of his subordinates I can read his signal clearly. He will not take the position of prime minister after the next elections," Chaikaphan said before the first part of the interview was aired on TV Channel 5 on Wednesday.

Thaksin has been widely accused of corruption, abuse of power and seeking to erode Thailand's democratic institutions. Months of street protests forced him to temporarily step down from his position, after which he returned on a caretaker basis pending elections which will probably take place before the end of the year.

THAKSIN

Chaikaphan, who is regarded as a seasoned player of the prime ministers and Thaksin would talk about his political future in the interviews scheduled for Thursday and Friday. The Wednesday interview focused on the prime minister's family, hobbies and accomplishments over the past few years.

In only a short pausing sentence, Thaksin said the "prime minister may change after the elections."

Thaksin, who is currently on a foreign tour, said in the interview that his life has been "uncomfortable" since an alleged attempt to assassinate him last month.

Five members of the army have been arrested in connection with the alleged plot to explode a powerful bomb near Thaksin's residence. Some critics accuse the government of cooking up the plot for its own political purposes.

"I lead my life normally, but it is uncomfortable since I have to follow rules about security. I have to think about my security and the dignity of the country," he said. "You can imagine how the reputation of the country would be like if its leader was assassinated."

Thaksin said his security team advises him to alter his daily routine and change the venues of his golf games.

Thaksin also had no clothing legislation, only a caretaker government since Thaksin dissolved Parliament in February for snap elections in April. He called the polls three years ahead of schedule in a bid to defuse the mounting protests against him.

New elections have been scheduled for Oct. 15 but there are widespread doubts they can be organized in time. Most election commissioners were cast out in a shake-out week.

Thaksin's party won the April elections, but the three parliamentary opposition parties boycotted the polls and millions of votes marked as abstentions or ballots in favor of a protest against the prime minister.

Because a minimum vote rule was not met in some constituencies, winners could not be certified, and Parliament could not be convened. AP

Hamas allows negotiations with Israel

GAZA CITY—HAMAS AGREED TO LOOK the other way while a government it leads negotiates with Israel, breaking its policy of rejecting the Jewish state in a desperate attempt to restore vital foreign aid cut off because of the Islamic group's militant ideology.

Khalil Hamad of Hamas, a spokesperson for the new government, said Tuesday that after the moderate Fatah is brought into a unity coalition, it can talk with the Israelis. Hamas rejects the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East, but Fatah, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, favors peace negotiations.

Hamad said negotiations aren't Israel says. The responsibility of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which Abbas heads. That means could allow Hamas to maintain its hardline ideology while pursuing international aid, which now can still when it sets up its government in March.

Israel, the United States and European Union label Hamas a terror group and insist it must renounce violence, recognize Israel and accept previous peace accords.

In Washington, State Department spokesperson Tom Casey said the EU would not resume aid until the Palestinian government accepts all the conditions.

Visiting Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos said the new Palestinian coalition could be a "positive step in principle," but he stopped short of saying whether it would be sufficient to persuade the EU to resume aid to the Palestinian Authority. "We'll have to study the details in the new meeting in Brussels, which will be on Friday, before we can come to an answer," Moratinos said. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Taiwan's bid blocked

UNITED NATIONS—China and its allies on Tuesday blocked the United Nations from considering for the 12th consecutive year, U.S.-led resolution to permit a proposal to put on the agenda of the U.N. General Assembly session the question of the representation and participation of the 23 million people of Taiwan in the United Nations. The International Committee, created in effect at the U.N. General Assembly's annual session, rejected the measure by consensus, without a formal vote, in the official said. The Friday's vote by current 49-ally started on Tuesday. Reuters

Yemen stampede

SANA'A—More than 50 people were injured in death in a stampede Sunday at an overcrowded stadium in southern Yemen during an election rally in President Ali Abdullah Saleh's second ahead of polls closely watched by violence. The stampede occurred when tens of thousands of people tried to get ready into the sports stadium at the town of Ibb, which already crammed with some 100,000 supporters, witnesses said. The official SABA news agency said 32 people had been killed and 230 wounded, though noted the injured had left hospital after treatment. AFP

Iran offers help to Iraq

TEHRAN—Iran's president pledged anti-insurgent to Baghdad's new government on Tuesday, offering Iraq's visiting prime minister and Nouri Maliki whatever Shi'ite Muslim Iran "can do to help." Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Maliki during a joint news conference in Tehran. Reuters

Sri Lanka peace talks

BRUSSELS—Sri Lanka's warring parties have agreed to unconditional peace talks next month, its battle-scarred country's international dialogue partners announced in Brussels on Tuesday. The decision by the government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was announced after a meeting of the island's main foreign aid donors here, the European peace broker Erik Solheim told AFP. "The government of Sri Lanka and those ready to talk to the LTTE have agreed to meet unconditionally [LTTE] on the basis," Solheim said. "We will have the talks in the first week of October in Oslo." AFP

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DAY 1 September 14, Thursday
8:00 Registration and Conference Program Overview
9:00 Welcome Address
10:15 Keynote Speech by Secretary Angelo Reyes
10:45 FORUM 1: "Pushing the Underground" Panelists: Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II (Ayala Corp.), Atty. Victor Dulay (DOST Director), Mark Villanueva (NEC Group Holdings), Joey Concepcion (PCE) & Chi Rufino (BBC)
12:00 FORUM 2: "Broadcasting our Business" Panelists: Ben Chavez (Jam Liner), Ray Espinosa (JFC), Jaime Ysmael Bautista (Jaime Global Value Management), Antonio Meloto (Mercator Communications), Krystal Thomas Gallardo, Dr. Ben Tumbo (Mercator), Jaime Ysmael (Philippine Mercator), Mark Magsaysay (Jet Philippines) & Jun Lim (Mercator)
2:15 FORUM 3: "Growing Wares from Toxic Business Opportunities in Biotechnology" Panelists: Dr. Vitaliano Gonzalez (Biotechnology), Jun Lim (Mercator Biotechnology), Tommy Lobo (Rizal Pacific International Corp.), Danny Mercado (Mercator Financial Brokerage), Ben Arnaiz (Hydrologic Consulting) & Mari Kanlis (UNEP/GRID)

DAY 2 September 15, Friday
10:00 FORUM 4: "Commercializing your Tech Venture" Panelists: Ramon Ang (Monterey Foods), Jose Ibazeta (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company), Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II (Ayala Corp.), Atty. Victor Dulay (DOST Director), Jaime Ysmael Bautista (Jaime Global Value Management), Antonio Meloto (Mercator Communications), Krystal Thomas Gallardo, Dr. Ben Tumbo (Mercator), Jaime Ysmael (Philippine Mercator), Mark Magsaysay (Jet Philippines) & Jun Lim (Mercator Biotechnology)
1:00 Ben Tumbo's Inspiring Technopreneurship Story (Philippine corporations and entrepreneurs are encouraged to participate in the Philippine Mercator Technology Business Competition. Students and young professionals with business ideas and technology-based companies are invited to apply. Interesting and financial support for breakthrough development and start-up growth. Business ideas must involve technology using Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology (STEM) in Energy, Water, Medical, Food, Safety, Transportation, Security, Paper, Packaging, Plastics, etc. Mail Philippine Mercator Technology Business Competition, 2nd Floor, Mercator Financial Brokerage Building, 6772 Ayala Avenue, Makati City)
2:30 FORUM 5: "Growing Business Ideas through Technology in Caring for Women" Panelists: Dr. Vitaliano Gonzalez (Biotechnology), Jun Lim (Mercator Biotechnology), Tommy Lobo (Rizal Pacific International Corp.), Danny Mercado (Mercator Financial Brokerage), Ben Arnaiz (Hydrologic Consulting) & Mari Kanlis (UNEP/GRID)
4:30 Closing Ceremonies / Awarding Raffle prizes

Hosts: Joey Concepcion & Antonio Meloto

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The WORLD

Lilet Lorenzo B. Olano

Syria probes attack on US Embassy

But Damascus says Washington fueling terrorism

DAMASCUS—SYRIA WAS INVESTIGATING Wednesday who was behind a bold but failed attack on the US Embassy in Damascus in which Islamist gunmen used grenades, automatic weapons and two explosives-laden vehicles.

Three assailants and a member of Syria's ambulance squad were killed in a shootout during the bid to storm the embassy, which came at a time of particularly tense relations between Washington and Damascus.

One of the gunmen who was captured during the attack has been interrogating with Syrian authorities, a senior US official said. Syrian Interior Minister Bassam Abdul Majid told US charge d'Affaires Michael Corbin that the attacker was "providing information to Syrian security authorities," but it was not immediately known who was behind the assault.

Department spokesperson Tom Casey said:

Casey said the attackers used two vehicles containing explosives, one of which approached the front of the embassy and the second moved toward the rear of the compound.

"The vehicle near the front of the compound did, in fact, explode. The other wasn't detonated," he said.

The Syrian state news agency SANA quoted Interior Minister Gen. Said Mouras Abdel Majid as saying "the terrorist attack failed. It did not achieve the objectives of the criminals responsible." SANA also described the attackers as "takfiri" or Islamic extremists, although no group has yet claimed responsibility.

The United States praised Syria's action in foiling the attack, while several other nations vowed to boost security in their missions in Damascus and US embassies on their own soil.

"I do think that the Syrian reaction this attack in a way that helped to secure our people and we very much appreciate that," UK Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said.

"It also once again illustrates the importance of Syria's being an important ally in the war on terror," added White House spokesperson Tony Snow. "We are hoping they will become an ally and render the choice of fighting against terrorists." Relations between Washington and Damascus have been strained over Iraq, the war in Lebanon and Syria's support for Palestinian militants opposed to the peace process with Israel, and last week the White House branded Syria and its top regional ally Iran "especially worrisome" threats.

"All embassy personnel and their family members are safe," the US embassy said in a statement, adding that the mission would stay closed for at least another day and calling on Americans to adopt a low profile.

"The Syrian government has pledged full security cooperation" but the Syrian Embassy in Washington said "it is regrettable that US policies in the Middle East have fueled extremism, terrorism and anti-US sentiment. AFP

SPACEWALK

This image provided by Nasa Tuesday Sept. 12 shows Bob wearing Joseph R. Tanner, mission specialist, wearing outside of the International Space Station on a mission during the first of three scheduled spacewalks.

100 nations call for talks on Iran

HAVANA—REPRESENTATIVES from more than 100 developing nations meeting in Havana called Tuesday for comprehensive negotiations to resolve the issues related to Iran's nuclear program.

Delegates at the 40-day Non Aligned Movement (NAM) summit also rushed out a hotly but dropped a proposed statement it be punished for "meddling." While the Middle East was high on the agenda, with the expected arrival of the Syrian and Lebanese presidents, the gathering was also the scene of rival lobbying by Venezuela and Guatemala for a seat on the UN Security Council. Caracas claimed it had backed to the wire to get a seat.

In a preview of talks due for a second day, it remained unclear whether Cuban President Fidel Castro, 80, would show up in the summit in what would be his first public appearance since he underwent intestinal surgery in July. The officials themselves met separate resolutions on Iran and the Palestinian territories, while also finalizing a draft final document the heads of state and government are to adopt on Saturday. Issues such as terrorism, Iran and the Middle East were hotly debated, participants said.

On Iran, the officials essentially updated a resolution adopted by a NAM meeting in May but added a paragraph stating the need for an "unconditional resumption of dialogue," the head of a prominent delegation said privately.

The statement adopted at the May gathering in Putrajaya, Malaysia indirectly put country had the right to use nuclear energy and welcomed what it said was Iran's "voluntary confidence-building efforts" aimed at resolving the issue. AFP

UN wants Hezbollah disarmed

UNITED NATIONS—UN CHIEF Kofi Annan, in a report on Lebanon released Tuesday, underscored the need to disarm the Iranian-backed Shiite Hezbollah militia and to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the broader Middle East.

The secretary general said he had been encouraged during his recent Middle East tour by unanimous calls by the various parties, including Iran and Syria, and said he expected "that further tangible responses." "No sooner the regime or clarification would replace the existence of armed groups which challenge the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force throughout its territory," annan said referring to Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has refused to surrender its weapons as called for by UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which paved the way for the cease-fire ended the 34-day war between Israel and the Shiite militant group in Lebanon.

Israel launched an offensive against the Iranian-backed militia in July following the capture of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah guerrillas in cross-border raids that left eight others troops dead.

Hezbollah has pledged to support Resolution 1701, but warned that it would not disarm until Israel ends its occupation of di Lebanese territory. AFP

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Pacman leads weight race against Morales/A25

SAN BEDA Red's Sam Ekwe blocks Miguel's Kelvin dela Pena in yesterday's semifinal game.

Lions, Dolphins forge NCAA title showdown

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SAN BEDA AND PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN took different paths yesterday before forging a showdown for the 2006 NCAA men's basketball championship at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Red Lions banged into the finals for the first time in nine years with a hard-fought 83-81 win over Mapua while the Dolphins humbled the defending champion Letran Knights with a 73-50 route.

The Dolphins reached the finals for the third straight time under three different coaches.

"We are happy to be in the finals once again," said PCU coach Joel Banal, who in the pre-season replaced Jamel Bacush. "But we are not afraid of San Beda because compared with them, we have been in the championship for the past three years while they didn't even reach the Final Four last year."

The Dolphins, who won in 2004 under Jun Valenzona, and the methodical Lions, who are aiming to end a 28-year title drought, begin their best-of-three title series Monday.

It was sweet revenge for SBU, which swept the Mapua Cardinals en route to the finals capped by a back-to-back comeback victory over Letran, which denied the Dolphins a second straight title in the Finals last year.

What was supposed to be a rough match turned out to be a lopsided affair as the Dolphins came out firing on all cylinders with PBA veterans Beau Belga, Gabby Espinas and Jason Castro rookie Ezekiel Gee.

In contrast, PBA-bound Knights Anton Maru (Manila MIX) and Boyet Ramirez (Formbank) had a grand total of one point in the Fourth quarter where the Knights fumbled with only six points.

Great game

Earlier, top-ranked San Beda trailed No. 4 semifinalist Mapua for most of the game before exploding in caller and most talented lineup to pull through.

"Mapua played a great game, we can't deny that," said San Beda coach Koy Banal. "But they surely brought out the best in us."

The Cardinals caused within striking distance before top benchman Yousif Aljamal poured seven of his 20 points late in the fourth quarter to settle the issue.

The Lions won their last title in 1978 with a team led by Chito Loyzaga, Franklin Lim and Jawee Pengo, who become PBA stars before retiring.

In the first game, San Sebastian downed San Beda, 84-52, to make it to the juniors championship series.

The scores:

First Game (jrs):

SAN SEBASTIAN (84)—Buenafe 12, Arriaga Jr. 12, Bellen 10, Arriaga Sr. 8, Manuyag 8, Zabala 8, Cleo 7, Schmidt, Pacaldo, Jamil.

SAN BEDA (52)—Rosales 17, Lacson 14, Padilla 12, Eco 5, Yee 2, Ramos 2, Cruz 2, Mendiola 0, Tenebro 0.

Quarters: 21-17, 33-32, 46-37, 84-52

Second Game (Jrs):

SAN JUAN (64)—Alpasa 20, Mesa 9, Santander 7, Angeles 6, Gandal 5, Dizo 4, Magpoc 3, Tecson 1, Laguna 0, Evangelista, Hernandez

MAPUA (57)—Gonzales 11, Dela Pena 11, Del Rosario 10, Tongco 6, Pascual 5, De La Rama 2, Pascual 2, Sumalinog 0

Quarters: 16-12, 33-30, 50-40, 64-57

Third Game (Jrs)

PCU (72)—Fuentes 18, Duval 14, Guevara 10, Lanuza 10, Belga 8, Amparado 8, Rosario 5, Flores 2, Sanoria, Santos 0.

LETRAN (64)—Rodriguez 18, Mesa 12, Jacob, Gonzaga 8, Dhaliwan 6, Fuentes 3, Tuazon 2, Ong 1, Reblora 1, Rodriguez, Rondaje 0, Del Rosario 0, Dayao 0.

Quarters: 16-8, 38-25, 51-44, 72-64

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TOYOTA moving forward

FVR new chair emeritus of FedGolf

AMNOS

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS, who remains the main backer of golf during his six-year stint in Malacañang, has accepted the position of chair emeritus of the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines Inc.

He said golfer FVR can become a catalyst for growth of the country's largest organization of private golf clubs, according to Manolo and Ricky Cayetano, Federation president and chair, respectively.

"Can there really be anyone better suited for this position? If anything, over-qualification comes to mind," said Manolo yesterday.

"It is timely for the Federation, which is entering its second decade of service to its membership, to avail of FVR's wealth of experience, wisdom and love for the game to guide it to its future."

Ramos was instrumental in conceptualizing the Federation which has 34 private clubs all over the country under its wing. He is expected to further promote junior golf development and training for competitions of the national players.

Just last year, Ramos was awarded the title Patron of the Asian Golf Tour in Singapore.

It was during FVR's presidency when the country enjoyed a golf boom that saw the mushrooming of golf courses and the population of local golfers pushing to an all-time high.

With his full support, the Philippines successfully hosted two major events that gained worldwide attention, the World Amateur Team Championships in '96, the Nestea Golf Club and The Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in 1998 and the Johnnie Walker Classic at The Orchard Golf and Country Club in 1995.

After his term, FVR continued to use golf diplomacy to the hilt in his many overseas trips to establish friendship with key and business communities abroad.

Only recently his foundation organized the 4th Sino-Filipino Friendship Golf Tournament in Chubai, China, where almost a hundred businessmen from China and the Philippines played and opened doors for possible new partnerships.

His generosity in lending his influence has helped groups like the Jaycee Foundation achieve its goals and led to the establishment of cooperatives for caddies and employees of golf clubs.

No pressure for Falcons, Tigers in tiff for 3rd spot

[GAME TODAY (Philsports Arena)
10 a.m. — UE vs UP (Women)
12 noon — Ateneo vs FEU (Women)
2 p.m. — UP vs Ateneo (m)
4 p.m. — UST vs Adamson (m)]

THE SANTO TOMAS TIGERS AND THE Adamson Falcons hardly feel the pressure when they dispute the third spot in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at 4 p.m. today at the Philsports Arena.

By the league's doldrums, the Falcons wrapped up the eliminations round and at 6-6 to reach into the Final Four.

STANDINGS	W	L
x-Ateneo	13	2
x-Univ of Visayas	9	6
x-Santo Tomas	9	6
x-Adamson	9	6
Far Eastern	6	7
Univ of Phils	6	8
National	3	9

x—Clinched Final Four berths

The winner of the match will face the unranked-ranked University of the East Warriors, while the losing squad will face the top-ranked Ateneo Eagles.

"We went to relax and see it as no-culinary game," said Tigers coach Pido Jarencio.

The Eagles and the Warriors, both heavy favorites from the start of the season, will be armed with the twice-to-beat bonus in the semifinals starting Sunday.

Achievement

For coach Leo Austria, it's already an achievement for the Falcons to end 12 years of mediocre performances and earn their first Final Four berth since the league adopted the format.

"Nobody thought we could make the Final Four is achievable," said Austria. "We were able to make it to the semifinals, so whatever happens, we're happy that we earn the players will give their best because it's an achievement for the school if we finish at No. 3."

Climbing a semifinal berth was also a huge accomplishment for the Tigers, who played with a depleted lineup most of the season due to various illnesses and injuries.

"We entered the Final Four through hard work," said Jarencio. "We're still playing to win, we want to stay focused."

As the Tigers finally enter a game with a healthy roster, the Falcons are anticipating the probable absence of point guard Marvin Rabanguy, who recently suffered from food poisoning.

It's another blow after the Falcons lost the services of starting point guard Leo Canaday late in the eliminations round due to a disciplinary decision.

But the focus will be on the matchup between the league's top two rookies. Adamson's Jon Banal ruled the statistical race after averaging a league-leading 21.8 points and a second-best 11.1 rebounds per game.

After collecting impressive numbers, Tigers rookie Jervy Cruz warned 16.3 points, a league-best 12.8 rebounds and 1.3 blocks per contest.

The Tigers and the Falcons split their eliminations battles. Adamson posted a 79-62 win in their first encounter, but UST avenged the loss with a 77-74 victory in the second round.

In other play, the Ateneo Blue Eagles and the University of the Philippines Junior Maroons will clash in a 2 p.m. knockout tilt. The winner will face second-seeded De La Salle-Zobel Taft Tamaraws in the semifinals. The mono-Eagles already claimed the first 11-win berth after sweeping the eliminations round.

Jeannine B. Rey

FILIPINO billiards ace Reyes checks out of the immigration booth at the Ninoy Aquino International airport yesterday morning. JEN CAMUS

Reyes heads Team RP to Jakarta Asian 9-ball

SARLEY REISTEL HALL OF FAMER EFREN "Bata" Reyes will spearhead once again Team Philippines when the 2006 San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour winds up in Jakarta, Indonesia, starting tomorrow.

Reyes, playing under the auspices of BP billiards patron Antonio "Pancit" Payot, received his biggest ever pay check worth P500,000 by demolishing American Rodney "Rocket" Morris, 8-6, in the finals of the BP World 8-Ball Championship last week.

Joining Reyes in the Asian 9-Ball Tournament by winners are Ronnil Gallego, and Rodolfo "Boy Jumawan" Luat, winners of the Bangkok and Taiwan editions, respectively.

Joining them in Reyes' world No. 1 Filipinos "Django" Bustamante, who is eyeing his first-ever Asian 9-ball title crown.

The pair of Reyes and Bustamante also beat the vanders of Morris and three-time world champion Ireal Mitchfield, 13-5, to win the inaugural World Cup of Pool in South Padre, Toronto.

Expected to challenge the Filipinos' domination of the series are Hailey Tang, and Alaksandar Kazakov of Indonesia and reigning World Pool Champion Wu Chia-ching of Chinese Taipei.

Indonesia is also represented by Agus Chinnaga and Roy Aparece. They will be joined by top Asian pool players from 12 countries who are all likewise eyeing qualifying points for the World Pool Championships this November in Manila. *Marilen Bermardino*

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo belatedly congratulated yesterday Efren "Bata" Reyes for winning the World Open 9-Ball championship in Reno, Nevada, last Monday.

In her congratulatory message to Reyes from International Pool Tour (IPT) 2006 World Open 9-Ball championship at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno.

But Reyes said the top cash award would be surpassed on a 50-percent win in the US title picture, he said, would be next to him in the coming days.

Reno his IPT trophy which is as tall as him was left in the US and will be shipped home later.

Reyes broke before the IPT player and then fired Francisco "Django" Bustamante split the $50,000 first prize in the inaugural World Cup of Pool after beating hometown final-ist Rodney "Rocket" Morris and Ireal Stickland in Reno South Wales.

The historic buddies, who call each other "brod" in their native tongue, is on board Philippine Airlines flight PR 101 from Los Angeles.

The two will only have time to bite their lunch once before leaving for Indonesia today to fulfill their commitment as seeds in the fourth leg of the 9-Ball Asian 9-Ball Tour in Jakarta.

Their arrival yesterday was in sadder than if every triumphant return of hosting legend, Manny Pacquiao, who is literally mobbed at the airport by fans and many public-seeking government officials.

Bata arrives sans fanfare with Django

By Nikko Dizon

LORIEN "BATA" REYES, WITH TWO INDIGENOUS WORLD POOL titles in less than 20 days, arrived yesterday morning from Reno, Nevada, without fanfare and a coterie of politicians meeting him at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

But it was just as well for his fans—mostly travelers, airline and airport personnel, and well-wishers—who had a grand time congratulating and enjoying a rare meeting with the Filipino billiards ace at 9 a.m.

Cheers of "Bata!" from a group of well-wishers at the Nida Government Terminal Complex welcomed as Reyes stepped out of the airport and made his way to his car.

With his trademark toothless grin, Reyes waved, nodded toward them, and gamely shook the hands of his excited fans.

Earlier, quite a number of airport personnel and passengers, including young American Jennifer Sanchez, were able to have their pictures taken with Reyes and get his autograph.

"This victory is for all Filipinos," said Reyes. "Sa mga kababayan namin sa mundo at sana'y, ang pagsasanay ako. So for advancements, I'll be back in the country to help out in huge training (bang) to hang here. I thank my countrymen here and abroad. In Nevada, many Filipinos took care of us are always sleep with a full stomach."

Reyes won $500,000 (P25.1 million), the biggest prize in billiards, after ruling the $5-million-guaranteed event.

He defeated Filipino-American Rodney Morris, 13-8, in the finals of the World Open 9-Ball Championship at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno.

Reyes, who is also the reigning World Pool Champion, has been invited to play in exhibition matches in Manila and Cebu.

Reyes was accompanied by Antonio "Pancit" Payot, president of the Billiard Congress of the Philippines (BCP), and Efren "Bata" Reyes Jr., his son.

New Era, Amacu dispute 2nd slot

[GAME TODAY (Rizal Coliseum)
1 p.m. — New Era vs Amacu]

AMACU COMPLETE TRIES TO PHALLY and the second championship berth for New Era will be clinging on the scoreboard. It gained the last three days ago as they tangle once more today in the Final Four of the National Athletics Associations of Schools, Colleges and Universities basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Heroes reigned the Team' series in heat edge with an 82-76 decision last weekend, and could make it two straight in the 1 p.m. home game.

The winner moves up against STI in the best-of-three title series which starts on Sunday.

Jeff de Guzman and Joseph Feliciano headed New Era's scoring game that derailed AMA's march in the finals. De Guzman fired 20 points, while Feliciano added 19 to bulge the rubber match.

The Olympians didn't need to use his mates to beat incentive talents they deposed of the Centro-Escolar Scorpions, 59-53, also last weekend.

The champion will become the first squad to succeed after the fall of the University of Manila giants.

The Heroes, who suffered losses losses with the graduation of their key players, ended sixth in the eliminations after ruling the league for six straight years. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Rush Interclub Smashfest Saturday

JOIN THE RUSH AT THE RUSH INTERclub Smashfest 2006 Asian in first and second legs over the weekend.

Interested players from Manila, Makati, Pasig, Muntinlupa, Ortigas, Marikina and Quezon City have less than a week to sign up for the badminton event that highlights amateur talents.

The tournament, which only has a mixed doubles category, is open for participants 18 years old and above. Registration is free. Call 822-4141/880.

A maximum of 16 badminton clubs from Metro Manila will duke it out for the title. cash prizes and grand trophy.

There will be four elimination legs to determine the top two teams that will battle in the finals slated Sept. 30 at the Olympic Badminton Club in San Juan.

The third and fourth legs will be held Sept. 23 and 24.

"This is a good venue to develop our skills in badminton," said project director Rosie Vasquez. "It's like giving the novice players an opportunity to shine in a competitive field."

The event hopes to lure players who are not included in the varsity teams of the NCAA, MAA and other collegiate leagues.

National and junior pool members, even those who are in the training pools are also not allowed to compete. Same thing goes to the professional coaches and trainers.

ARCILLA

Arcilla stakes Abalos Cup title Sept. 23

DEFENDING CHAMPION JOHNNY ARCILLA will tangle with fellow national players in the P100,000 Abalos Cup slated Sept. 23 at the NCBDC Mandaluyong Tennis Club court in Mandaluyong City.

Arcilla, who won the singles and doubles titles in the Pagan City Open last Thursday, is expected to face Joseph Feliciano, Jason Patrick John Torre, Adolfo Abadilla, Rolando Raul Jr. and Joseph Vercelles, back from a one-year retreat in Japan.

Aside from the men's Open, the organizing Mandaluyong Tennis Club is also holding a junior tournament for nine weekends and an All Manila singles open tennis affair.

Registration will run until Sept. 19 (men's) and Sept. 20 (juniors). Contact tournament coordinator Carmelo Bobo Gregorio (0917-7413681), Lany Diaza (0927-5808833), Ace Alcoa (0917-8613741) and MTC (526-3981 ext. 3000 and/or 7217817).

Nat'l chess team meet opens with 50 entries

COMMANDING HONTE: NCFP executive director lawyer Sammy Estino and NCFP president April Dizon make the ceremonial moves of the National Inter-Cities and Municipalities Chess Tournament yesterday. Standing are James Infante, Engr. Alba, engineer Allan Chua, Rong Co, Ignacio Tuquero, QM Jose Antonio, City Councilor Lou Aviso III, NCFP director Dr. Jonny Mayor and Dr. Benjamin Tomassi Jr. of BSPHI.

DAVAO CITY—THE 2006 NATIONAL INTER-Cities and Municipalities Chess Team Championship opens today with 50 top collies teams set to action at the Grand Convention Multiplex.

Tagaytay City component of Grandmaster Joey Antonio, International Master Joyce Gonzales, Edmundo Garcia, Allan Morales and team captain and National Chess Federation of the Philippines director Willy Abalos, will lead the Tagaytay City delegation.

Tagaytay City is supported by NCFP secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr.

GM Mark Paragua, the country's highest-rated player, will play for Davao Team A along with IM Rabindranath Tayson, Arnel Arna, Perfecto Bayaua and Jr. Jerma Mayor, scout Mikaylene Chalmers go to co-champion.

The 2006 champion Barangay Alabang, Muntinlupa City team of chair Willy Mandaluyong and team captain Jayvee Sumalinog will defend its title. Also in the roster are IM Nelson Mariano, IM Jonathan Bancod, Dino Bellosillo and Rustlie Pacheco on its first team and IM Ronald Dableo, IM Richard Bitoon, Rachel Legaspi, Noel dela Cruz, and Odessa Loyola in the second team.

Also in contention are the five-team formed by NCFP executive Jay Jay Javier's "Pebay Davao will be represented by 13 teams.

Expected to grace the opening ceremonies yesterday afternoon were Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Philippine Sports Commission chair Pelilian "Butch" Ramirez and National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Prospero "Pinoy" Pichay Jr. IM Marlon Bernardino

10,000 bets joining Milo CDO elims

ARNOLD UNABIA AND ALLEN TACUBO will be defending their crowns when the 30th Barangay Milo Kiamfootball tournament gets Sunday with its Cagayan Dre City elimination race at the Nilarn Sports Center.

Six slots—three each in the men's and women's divisions—to the national finals on Dec. 10 in Metro Manila are at stake in the 2.0 race.

Unabia, a reigning two-time champion, will be challenged by former champion Mabel Langcuda and perennial qualifier Roger Suarez-ay.

Tacubo, on the other hand, is expected to face little resistance as former champion Aileen To-lentino is already qualified after the finals after topping the 42K Metro Manila leg last July 16.

Slot at stake for this Sunday's elimination was held in partnership with Sunview Park (host), Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and PowerBar, are the 5K fun run, Kid-dies 1K run, inter-school running contest and cheer-dance competition.

More than 10,000 runners are expected to join this Sunday's festivities, offering P150,000 cash prizes plus trophies and medals to top 10 finishers in the 21K, 5K and 3K runs.

Meanwhile Olympian Rosemarie Morales will fie the starting gun for the 5K run while City Councilor Jose Sy will do the same for the 21K run. The 3K fiddle run will be flagged off by engineer Nestor Gilabad, also the City Administrator for NHA. Expected for the awarding ceremonies are reigning Miss Universe Dina Manila and Miss sports queen contestant Pia Cue Ong.

Acsat grabs F4 slot

ASIAN COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (ACSAT) struck it late yesterday to flip the Red Wrestlers (men) game of the 8th Intercollege and Collegiate Athletic Association (ICCAA) basketball tournament.

Triplets from Glen Cacal and Harvey Igita at the start of the extra period sent the fightings to a 66-66 deadlock of the Olivarez College San Lorenzo and to the Final Four berth. The fightings finished Wrestlers shaking the talent in 4 out of 5 games in the season.

Cavite Agricultural College and St. Francis of Assisi assured the top two finish from zone action as well as the whopping separate slots. LAU dropped to Cebu Doctors-Mac, 77-56, while St. Francis drubbed Philippine School of Business Administration, 89-52.

HAPPY FACEQUIAO (right) currently tips the scales at 138 pounds while Erik Morales is at 130.

Pacman leads weight race against Morales

BOXERS' FACEQUIAO IS WAY AHEAD of Erik Morales in their race to get down to the 130-lb super featherweight limit for their rubber match on Nov. 18 in Las Vegas.

Reports said the Filipino boxing icon is now only eight pounds overweight while his Mexican rival is still at 136-lbs. Both a high of 130 when he started on a weight-reducing regimen with the help of an international team of trainers and nutritionists.

But Morales has announced that "weight won't be a problem when he takes on Pacquiao for the third time in a showdown dubbed "The Grand Finale" to be held at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas.

"I trust, is way and not just to make weight," insisted Morales, in an interview with the Mexican media yesterday.

Morales, who has been working out at the Velocity Sports Performance Center, even boasted that he is now on the verge of making the 130-lb limit, although he did not elaborate on his current weight at the scales.

Pacquiao, however, gets weight after their last fight and try to get back to their old poundage when they train for another outing. Morales has already fought as a lightweight (133 lbs) before his second meeting with Pacquiao, without he reportedly had a hard time making the super featherweight limit.

Both Morales and Pacquiao are set to face the media on Sept. 19 in the Beverly Hills Hotel.

The fight contract stipulates that the Mexican will have to pay half a million dollars if he cannot stay around over the regulatory limit, and should he come in more than two pounds overweight, Pacquiao has the option to reject the fight, and get the one million dollar penalty.

Pacquiao, meanwhile, is set to train for the United States tonight, with Freddie Roach, Jesse Ray Corpuz, Buboy Fernandez and Boom Boy, Jenny Good Fernandez and some other friends.

The Filipino hero is expected to be in special regards when Ritsuo Antonio Inoue's defends his WBC super featherweight title on Sunday at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Filipino Diamboko Gobi, now managed by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach, is slated to see action in the undercard.

Salvio L. Lagumbay

Domingo leaving for France fight

PHILIPPINE BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPION Michael Domingo will leave for France on Sept. 27 to fight French Frederic Patrac for the vacant World Boxing Foundation bantamweight title on Oct. 6.

The title fight is set in Agde, France, which is known as "The Island City".

According to a tourism website, it is an enclosed self-contained village, where tourists can do everything in their birthday suits, including going to the bank, post office, restaurants, laundromats or for a walk along the 3.5 mile beach.

Domingo, however, said he is not going to fight in de suite-ogling but to demolish Patrac and win. He will be accompanied in the trip by manager Sammy "Boy King" Gello-ani and trainer Alfredo Villalon.

The power-punching Ilonggo, born in Bacolod City based in Agdo, holds a record of 19-7-1, with 13 KOs, and is managed by Mario Ocio. He is the French bantamweight title-holder.

Patrac had 22 fights as an amateur, winning 18, losing 4 and drawing once.

Domingo, a veteran of 40 fights, won the IBF crown last year, and has successfully defended 3 times since. Salvio L. Lagumbay, contributor

Acsat grabs F4 slot

ASIAN COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (ACSAT) struck it late yesterday to flip the Red Wrestlers (men) game of the 8th Intercollege and Collegiate Athletic Association (ICCAA) basketball tournament.

Triplets from Glen Cacal and Harvey Igita at the start of the extra period sent the fightings to a 66-66 deadlock of the Olivarez College San Lorenzo and to the Final Four berth. The fightings finished Wrestlers shaking the talent in 4 out of 5 games in the season.

Cavite Agricultural College and St. Francis of Assisi assured the top two finish from zone action as well as the whopping separate slots. LAU dropped to Cebu Doctors-Mac, 77-56, while St. Francis drubbed Philippine School of Business Administration, 89-52.

Concepcion eyes WBC title in US

FILIPINO PROSPECT BERNABE CONCEPcion of the Ilijan Batte Stable takes on undefeated Mexican Johnson "El Terrible" Hernandez for the vacant WBC Asian Boxing Federation crown on Sept. 23 in the United States.

The 28-year-old Concepcion, nicknamed the "Real Deal" and trained by Filipino Arnijo Sol, parades a record of 38 wins, 3 loss, 1 draw with 11 KOs and a considered one of the country's top prospects.

Hernandez, fighting out of Inuewood, Mexico, boasts an unblemished record of 11 wins with 8 KOs.

The NBC Youth title is for fighters aged 21 years old and below.

Concepcion's win originally slated to see action this Sunday against compatriot Sonny Crusader at the Cantada Sports Complex, but opted to answer the call of duty to the United States instead.

Concepcion gained a measure of fame lately when he "called out the undefeated Boy "Sweet Boone" Rasuma for a fight. Salvio L. Lagumbay

SPORTSWATCH

Jao seeks 4th Superbikes sweep

WINNING TWICE APIECE AT THE ADVANCE RAMBLER/PETRON Seventh straight season in the 2006 Shell Advance Superbikes Grand Prix, San Miguel Pilsimpanan Basketball Conference Commissioner Jaime Jao will try to make it four straight in the Batangas Raceway 200 GP. Jao finished up his last title in a 1:08.1008 Mean speed after qualifying the last leg and taking his fourth 100 points in the pre-season Grand Slam of the event sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports Association (NMSA). Defending champion Dely Nuevo Mendoza of Lipa City missed out on the cup of Jao's Mitsubishi Racing Team. He comes armed with 4:08 clocking his pole on Roadside Boys (3 th points), Whacky Racing (7 th), Army Boys (8th), Randy Cycle (4th), Jaybee Cattle (6th) and Mitsubishi (6th). 3 th will be a close-up between Jay Cantoria and Michael Bautista. The event is sponsored by Philippine Shell and supported by San Miguel Coffee Center Filipino Yokohama Cheese, Asia and Shield.

SPORTS EXPO: Burlington Industries Phils. Inc.'s Joel Capadocia shows Burlington's booth at the World Trade Center to GMC's Sherwin Bringas and Acsat's Joy Dimaculangan.

Cusi wins SMB RP 9-Ball Cebu leg

ANTHONY CUSI EMERGED CHAMPION, 7-4, TO CONFIRM HIS FAVORITE TAG IN THE 2006 San Miguel Philippine 9-Ball Open Third qualifying leg in Cebu City. Cusi, a regular campaigner in national tournaments, salvaged a spot in the round-robin with a 7-0 rout over Rolando Andales in the other half of the group. Another campaigner Israel Pino crossed his four matches in advance. Manuel Lim completed the qualifiers from the south after a 7-4 win over Jerry Pelayo in the event's finale. The four crossed P1,000 each and scored slots in the finale of the annual tournaments organized by Sosio and Royal Sports cabin on Oct. 12-15 in Manila. Dominic Dee finals are the top eight finishers last year led by defending champion Francisco "Django" Bustamante and runners up Dennis Orcollo and ranked players Efren "Bata" Reyes, Jose "Amang" Parica, Warlito Mendoza and Alex Pagulayan. Warlito Bustamante

NBC MEMBER: Cellular Powerdrop has joined the National Basketball Conference's 2006 National Cup starting on Sept. 16, hosting it the league's newest team. NBC secretary general Tito Palma (fifth from left) welcomes Cellular Powerdrop president Paulo Ramos and his other team officials and player Ronnie Dolores (fifth from left). Mentor Tarzan Andaya coach Joseph Cu, team manager/team official Jerome Ramos, vice president Alex Lejero, team consultant Eugene Ramos, team official Marianne Ramos and general manager Jeffrey Sia.

Buenavista, Manipol banner Adidas King of the Road cast

TWO-TIME ADIDAS KING OF THE ROAD HOPEFUL Ona road is at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City at 6 a.m. on Sunday with an estimated 2,000 runners, including members of the Philippine troops, vying for the crown and the top prizes of P200,000 worth of Adidas gear and P150,000 cash.

Some 10.9 cadets of the PMA are also joining the 10.0 event that will go nationwide next year. Senator Pia Cayetano has been invited to join.

Top favorites are two-time Olympian Eduardo Buenavista and Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Mary Joy Manipol, who ruled the Adidas race in 2004. Buenavista and Manipol were also former Adidas team King and Queen of the Road. They skipped last year's edition because of prior engagements.

While Manipol is expected to execute little challenge, the men's battle will be ruled by defending Adidas King of the Road champion Adlin Serrano, who won the silver in the 5K and the bronze in the 10K events during the last SEA Games.

Though Buenavista has topped countless 42K marathons here and abroad, Serrano may steal the show because 10K is his favorite event.

Sunday's race begins and ends in front of BMD Chairs on Seaside Blvd. of the SM Mall of Asia. Parking is at the open car park of the BMD chairs.

The age group and team competition winners will also receive cash prizes, medals and gift packages from Globe, Chortler Multinutrients, Diadem Chocolate Bar, Powerade, Nice Almond Nuts, Blue Angel Lubricant and Adidas sportswear.

According to Adidas Managing director Jaro Bingpiat, the local edition of the race itself will have four steps — Metro Manila, Cebu, Baguio and Davao. The winners will represent the country in the next Asian King of the Road to be held in Thailand.

Also hosting the event are the Philippine Reclamation Authority PNP MMDA, Sunny Cay TMO, Philippine National Red Cross, Philippine Center for Sports Medicine, the security force of Mall of Asia and Spectrum Communications.

EDUARDO BUENAVISTA, Top favorite

10 firms back Ateneo de Naga golfest

TEN PROMINENT FIRMS HAVE SO FAR committed to support the Ateneo de Naga University High School Class 1981 Golf Cup set on Sept. 29 at the Camp Agononcillo course in Clarkfield, Pampanga.

Three are Toyota Makati, which is offering a 2006 Toyota Vios 1.3E as hole-in-one prize; Globe Telecom, CD Gaisano, Bicutelecom, Target Market Communications, Cebuana Lhuillier, Interbilt Steel, Syngenta Seeds Philippines, Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils. and First Philippine Thunder.

Proceeds from the 18-hole golfest will be used for the Class 1981 Scholarship Fund for deserving Students.

"Tee off" time is at noon while fellowship kicks off at 4 p.m.

Organizers expect more dozens to join the netted list of supporters for the tourney with a noble mission.

Presidential son Dato Arroyo and Camarines Sur Governor Dimy Villafuerte, both Ateneo de Naga alumni, have been invited to lead the assembled tee-off together with former Pasay Police mayor of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Tournament co-chair Arnel Cervantes and John Sorsabi were elated by the warm response of the participants.

For details, call Brig. Arbel Cervantes at (02) 913 5001 local 6063 or 0256-1930/0920 9237 or Noni Ventura Jr., Bristol Project, the event marketing and management company of the Ad-MU Eli '81 Golf Club at 532-1953 and 404-9750.

AAK sending team to world karatedo

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE Advancement of Karatedo (AAK) is sending a team composed of winners in the Kilo Super Kumite Kids all-1M Impermeable tournament series to the 5th World Shotokan Championships to be held at the Tokyo Budokan Hall in Tokyo, Japan, Sept. 17, 18, 19.

Led by AAK chief Manuel "Cheng" Salas, the team is composed of Dominic Mendoza, Gerardo Rodrigo Antonio, Ann Valentino Tan, Mike Earvin Cibu, Oliver Del Mundo, Nicole Dominic Ayroc, Lemuel Antonio Nieto and Nic Laurence Silangil.

Also with the team are WKF karate referee and kata judge Richard Amobon Lim and coach Jean Cube Magallon.

Shito-Ryu is one of the four major styles of karatedo that is recognized by the Japan Karatedo Federation (JKF) and the World Karate Federation (WKF) as the official organization of Shitoryu karate-ka by the use of the founder Kenei Mabuni.

The AAK being the sole representative of the JKF Shitoryu Karate in the Philippines has been consistently participating in the World and Asian Shitoryu Championships.

For inquiries, call 427-9608, 551-4611 or e-mail aakmedia@skyinternet.net or aakmedia@yahoo.com.

Bunyi outdrives peers

Red Bull notches third straight victory

SPORTS

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

RP trails Hong Kong by 1

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—HONG Kong's Harold Freeman and James Stewart fired an eight-under 63 Wednesday to lead the Philippines by a stroke on the opening day of the World Cup qualifiers.

The top two pairings from the 14 nations competing at the first Selangor Golf Club cyclic contests of Kuala Lumpur will qualify for December's World Cup Championships in Barbados.

After six straight pars, Stewart and Freeman numbered for nine birds and a lone bogey in their last 12 holes of Wednesday's four-ball, or low ball, format to retain the lead from the Philippines' Jervie Dignasas and Gerald Rosales.

"It's my third time to join this qualifying for the World Cup but my first with James," said Rosales, who contributed four of the seven birdies to the Philippines' round of 64. "He's got a lot of talent and he's striking it really good. Hopefully, it will be the third time lucky for me."

Malaysia's Safy Sirad and Danny Chia share third with Mardan Mamat and Lam Chih Bing three strokes more at 65.

"My partner's putting was phenomenal," Freeman said after notching his second birdie-conversion of their nine birdies.

Stewart chipped in for birdie on the 15th, and sailed a 40-foot putt for another on the next hole.

Malaysia stayed in contention until the back nine, when it went haywire—on the 18th and 18th—left them two adrift of the Hong Kong pairing.

The Filipino, meanwhile, had to play with borrowed clubs after their luggage failed to arrive on time. The pairing of Dasmariñas Country and Tennessee Hills next are joint CEOs with Golfer on 68.

Thursday's format switches to a foursome, alternate shot scoring. AP

ROSALES: Hoping that the third time's a charm

PAGUNSAN: Striking the ball really well

Schumacher debate on: Hero or heel?

WOODS

ALONSO

LONDON—Will does "Tiger Woods gift as the world's best active athlete?

It's seven-time Formula One champion Michael Schumacher.

"For what he [Schumacher] has done year-in and year-out," Woods said Thursday after arriving in London to play charity tonight's tournament in Britain and Ireland.

Woods' declaration goes one in the latest debate in the F1 scene. Who follows Schumacher the good guy or the villain in the marquee racing circuit?

Renault's Fernando Alonso, locked in a bitter duel with the Germany great, rides in entering as the clear favorite, thinks Schumacher was owning's bad boy.

While plaudits rained down on the Ferrari ace, Alonso questioned the 37-year-old's win-at-all costs ethos and said the latter retired from the sport with a reputation worse than French football star Zinedine Zidane.

"Michael is the man with the most emotion and is the most supporting driver in the history of Formula One," Alonso declared. "Even Zidane retired with more glory than Schumacher."

The statement was in reference to the French football great's infamous headbutt and resulting red card against Italy in the World Cup final, his last game before retirement.

Schumacher's manager rushed to the German driver's defense, accusing Alonso of "pitiful behavior."

Bild newspaper quoted Willi Weber on Wednesday as saying that Alonso's comments to Spain's Radio Marca was an "unbelievable insult, totally below the belt."

The remarks will ensure an even more spirited rival to the 2006 championship, with drivers two points clear of Schumacher going into the final three races. Schumacher is then to retire from the sport. AFP/Reuters, AP

AND NOW the question: What legacy did Michael Schumacher leave behind? AFP

Favorites Barcelona and Chelsea score opening triumphs

LONDON—FC BARCELONA AND Chelsea picked up victories Wednesday on the opening day of the group stage in this season's Champions League.

Defending champion Barcelona routed Bulgarian team Levski Sofia 5-0 at Camp Nou stadium on Benin striker Emile Mpenza and Lazaros Galy, and three in the second half from Carles Puyol, Samuel Eto'o and Ronaldinho.

"We know we couldn't relax because any team can beat you," Puyol said.

Chelsea, which has spent about 400 million pounds (US$750 million) in the last three years for players, beat Werder Bremen 2-0 on goals by Michael Essien and Michael Ballack. Ballack's penalty was his first goal for Chelsea since moving from Bayern Munich.

"I'm happy, but it was a difficult game for us," Ballack said. "Of course it was the first game, and nobody knows how we'd start.

"I knew Germany was a very good team, and it was important we scored the first goal."

Ballack took the penalty instead of Frank Lampard, after he missed several key penalties in recent games.

"Before I spoke with Frank and he said I can take it," Ballack said.

Chelsea and Barcelona are both in Group A and will play in back-to-back games on Oct. 18 and 31.

"It was an important victory," Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho said. "It was the first game and it was against a team we knew well—almost every game and every point and can give a difficult time to Barcelona."

Also, it was Steaua Bucuresti 4, Spartak Moscow 0, and Sporting Lisbon 1, Inter Milan 0 in Group B; Olympiacos 3, Besiktas 0, and PSV Eindhoven 0, Liverpool 0 in Group C; and Olympiakos 2, Valencia 0, and AS Roma 4, Shakhtar Donetsk 0 in Group D. AP

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BUSINESS

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Tell us your feedback: business.inq@inquirer.com.ph

BIR surpasses August collection target

Measures implemented to meet full-year goal of P675.4 billion

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE EXCEEDED ITS TAX COLLection goal for August, as it stepped up efforts to wipe out the huge shortfall posted in the first seven months of the year.

Preliminary government revenue data showed that as of the last week of August, the BIR has already collected about P1 billion more than its target of P67.77 billion for the month.

The final tax revenue figure for August may even go higher than the estimate upon completion of the computations of all collections during the period, a revenue official said.

The BIR's tax collection performance in August was largely boosted by the P6.6 billion worth of withholding taxes on dividend payments and income taxes paid by power firm Meralco PhilippineCorp.

A ranking revenue official, however, said it was not certain if the excess in that month's collection could wipe out the shortfall posted in the first seven months of the year amounting to P9.6 billion.

The BIR collected only P367.2 billion from January to July this year, short of the agency's revenue-search target of P375.24 billion.

Revenue officials said, though that the agency had implemented several measures to enhance tax collection efficiency and hoist its chances of still hitting its full-year tax collection target of P675.4 billion.

One of the measures adopted by the BIR was the use of third-party information, such as clients of corporate taxpayers, to check the accuracy of declared incomes. Another is "tax mapping," where the BIR sends personnel to businesses' establishments to check the level of their tax compliance.

Also, the BIR said it had adopted the "industry benchmarking" method of tax auditing, where the average incomes of companies in an industry were used as basis in determining the accuracy of income declarations made by tax payers engaged in it.

Some revenue officials said the shortfalls were brought about not only by tax administration-related problems but also by the fact that the targets were too high.

This year's collection targets of the BIR of P675.4 billion is about 17 percent higher than the P577 billion collected last year.

The BIR is trying to meet its tax collection goal for this year in essence from its under-performance last year. The BIR's tax collection of P577 billion last year was about 3 percent lower than the target of P594 billion.

with BLI

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Oil bill hit $3.5B as of June /B8

Business, market split on economic prospects

By Dianne L. Lucas

IF THE RESULTS OF RECENT surveys are anything to go by, there is a persistent difference of opinion between the businesses and the consumers they serve about the Philippines' economic prospects.

On one hand, several surveys released in recent weeks consistently showed that consumer confidence was on the rise, with a growing number of people feeling more secure and more optimistic about the future.

Filipinos are now a little more comfortable about the big picture," said AC Nielsen (Philippines), managing director Brandon L. Gil Jr. as he unveiled the most, point's latest consumer confidence results recently.

The survey revealed that Filipino consumers were worrying less about the economy and were, therefore, becoming bolder in their purchases.

"The economy is becoming less of a preoccupation for Filipinos than six months ago," Gil said. "In our case, [concern over the economy] doesn't seem to be as salient as with other countries."

On the other hand, however, the business community seems to share less of the enthusiasm that

BUSINESS B1

Currencies

AUGUST SEPTEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 50.80 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Sept. 13, 2006

$ 1 = ¥ 117.70

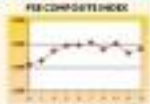
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 13, 2006

GOLD: $605.20/OZ.

per metric ton, Sept. 13, 2006

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Click on each market report on Page B2.

Stocks close 0.75% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY ended 0.75 percent higher on a technical bounce sparked by overnight gains on Wall Street and lower oil prices, dealers said. Investors, however, were generally reluctant to trade after the benchmark index rose modestly to hold onto recent gains above

STOCKS B1

The clarity of white

The exciting new shades of BMW take shape with the new BMW 1 and 3 Series Limited Edition models. Revealed at the BMW Xpo. September 15 to 17, 2006 at the BMW Pavilion, Bonifacio Global City.

BMW Xpo Experience

Special Event Offers

BMW Products

BMW xpo 2006

Sales of pre-need firms up 17%

Pension plans drew the most buyers, with sales growing by 25%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SALES OF PRE-NEED FIRMS continued to grow in July to P1.524 billion, up 17 percent from P1.3 billion during the same month last year.

The growth in sales was boosted by higher prices of plans and the decision to shift out of certain trust-fund investments.

Industry sources said some investors may have sought refuge in alternative investments, which included pre-need plans, many from unit investment trust funds, as open-ended trust funds invested in govern, most securities and shares of stock.

Some months ago, there were signs individuals of investments to IUTFs over fears that about 30 to 35 percent of investments to these instruments should be zeroed due to falling bond rates and share prices.

Leading the sales uptrend in July were pension plans which rose 25 percent in July to P97,1.25 million from P779 million in the same period last year.

Life plans fell 40 percent to P1.3 billion during the January to July period from P1.6 billion in the same period last year.

Education plans also slowed, 38 percent to P12.3 billion during the first seven months from P4 billion in the same period last year.

For the seven-month period, the number of plans sold slipped 37 percent to 1,29,109 from 204,907 in the same period last year.

Of the total, life plans fell 46 percent to 42,923 from 79,133, while education plans dropped 43 percent to 19,981 from 34,927.

In July alone, the number of plans declined 19 percent to 19,210 from 16,750.

Pension plans accounted for the biggest drop at 8,461 plans, down 58 percent from 18,148.

Lame excuse me

WHO WILL EVER TAKE THE BLAME for the convenient excuse (something to do with environmental protection) to shut down the second busiest runway in Luzon—the one in Fort Pedro in La Union?

It's been more than a month since the government sent heavily armed troops to take over the port, which was then managed by a private company called Subic Bunkers.

The idea led to that time-to shutdown all of everything but was supposed to move at the busy port—cars, coolers, perhaps even cows.

That commando-like operation was carried out by the customs bureau in spite of objections on the basis of a DENR "cease and desist order."

And so, the multimillion-peso question is, who actually asked the DENR to issue the order by the first place?

BCDA president Rancho Abaya, the former AFP chief of staff, insists up to now that he had nothing to do with the DENR order.

He only admits that he had asked the Philippine Ports Authority to take over the port as the DENR already—ineffectively—issued the order.

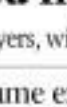
Felix S. Nicolo, president of Pure Point Management Group, of PPMC, the BCDA subsidiary for the seaport operations, also denies that he had asked the DENR for the order.

But the "legal basis" of the whole dura commando like operation, as I said, solely rested on that DENR order. And they allege that it only asked for it?

The truth is, after the DENR got a written request from a certain "Felix Nicolo S. Rancho" to close down the port, the DENR issued the order to record him of two hours.

And so, excuse me, but who said that this case administration has a lame when it comes to doing something about the long delays suffered by truckers day in and night?

Anyway, if the DENR was really protecting the environment—which led it to order the closure of the port—why did it take the DENR so long years to



do so?

The MMDA claimed that the Ports Police operation never ordered a DENR environmental clearance from the beginning.

But the BCDA insists all part of it is from the start—as owner of the port and 30 percent stockholder of the joint venture company operating it.

So we take it then that the BCDA never cleared, whatsoever it gave the go-ahead for the company's compliance with government rules and regulations?

Up to now, the ex-general always still adheres to the view that the government role in the joint venture should only be to certify the lack of DENR clearance.

It's just that the supposed "ban" discovery happened, rather conveniently, after the government relented and failed to declare null and void the contract with the port operator.

Something must really be wrong in the decision-making of the BCDA. That's why the BCDA today is spending Ph.5 million for its PR campaign.

Recent reports also said that the retired general also signed a Ph166-million contract all by himself, mirroring, without approval of the BCDA board.

It was a supplemental contract that called for additional expenses between Subic and Clark, which are the runway US bases were under the care of BCDA.

Apparently, Abaya forgot that he could not legally go into contract worth more than P5 million without the approval of his board.

When the thing hit the fan, and while media homed on it, Abaya immediately cancelled the contract.

And to tell us that there was no clearance for the deal? Or that the BCDA did not disburse a single centavo for the contract.

But who knows what could now happened with that P166 million republic funds, say if media forgot to report on the "lapse" of the BCDA chief executive, particularly since the BCDA has that P6.5 million PR budget?

* * *

The name BCDA, by the way, had a major role in the grant to the Subic national bulkhead of a long-term lease over a huge chunk of prime property at the Port.

My info is that the lease contract declared, in which the unsolicited proposal (US) of Eton Properties was approved, carries the handful on running rate of P100 per square meter a year.

If my math is correct, that is about P25 per square meter a month. It is cheaper than any land rental in any squatter area in the metropolis.

* * *

It looks like the fortune of Internal Revenue is dead serious in its so-called tax mapping, which is in because its house campaign really has no chance.

In the Manila district alone, based on its price assessment, the BIR discovered more than 1,000 businesses with various tax violations.

Still, as probably for all those violations, the BIR is only able to collect less than P1 million, after spending endless man-hours.

Then it seems that BIR is dead serious only when it comes to small fries. For, how come the BIR is still helpless in the case of the most lucrative investment playboy?

During the time of the man named Reed ... Wait Reed, the BIR assessed one of the companies of the businessboy-devil and found that it had some P600 million in tax liabilities.

It seems that the case has been buried. Up to now, nobody in the BIR could say whether or not the company already settled its alleged tax liabilities.

Worse, the BIR records of the case are now missing. Think, the case involves P600 million!

I mean, how many small businessmen in the country does the BIR have to catch with one's cue tax violations, for it to raise such an amount?

If my math is correct, the BIR still need only some 16 million small business establishments.

Tanduay Holdings to acquire Unimark

DISTILLERY HOLDINGS INC. OF tycoon Lucio Tan on Tuesday received the approval of its board to buy all the shares of asset conglomerate Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. from embattled shareholders.

"The transaction is understood to be ordinary course of business of the company, nonmaterial with its primary purpose as a holding company," Tanduay Holdings said in its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Officials of Tanduay declined to reveal details of the deal.

Unimark Investments, led by former Federation of Philippine Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Rolando Bolivar, bought the nonperforming assets of Philippine Bank of Communications in 2004 for P2 to 3 billion.

Tan himself was a past president of the Filipino Chinese frat, Kaisahan.

Rolando's acquired assets—which consisted largely of foreclosed properties, some of questionable recovery in PBCom's books as to be worth P12 billion in 2004, sources said.

Industry sources said Tan got a good deal in buying idle pieces of property of Rolando at a cheap price, properties which they intend to use as regional biz liquor manufacturing plants under Tanduay.

With the boom in the property sector, Tan's asset acquisition is seen to appreciate in value over the coming years, sources said.

Cash from operating activities stood at P113 million as of June 30 this year.

Net sales for the first semester of 2006 amounted to P1.90 billion—a decrease of 17 percent from last year's P2.71 billion.

Consolidated net income in the first half amounted to P119 million, down by 74 percent from last year's P462 million.

The decrease in net sales and net income was mainly due to the 27 percent decline in sales volume, especially of its mainstay rum and Tanduay Gin gin.

Despite the 5.14-percent growth in the agricultural sector in the first six months of 2006, sales volume still declined, due to weaker consumer demand as a result of higher inflation due to the sharp rise in world crude oil prices during the period.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FLI secures P2.4-B deal with Israeli investors

PROPERTY DEVELOPER FILSTREAM Land Inc. (FLI) has entered into a P2.4-billion deal with Africa Israel Investments (Philippines) Inc., a subsidiary of one of Israel's largest investment firms, to develop residential and tourism projects covering 6.11 hectares of its township projects in San Mateo, Rizal, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

FLI said it has signed two joint-venture agreements with Africa Israel to develop its Antonio Heights township project covering roughly 6.11 hectares.

Africa Israel, which will have a 40-percent stake in the development, will invest about P1.6 billion. It will also have the option to take its investment by an additional P2.1 billion over the next five years which could bring total investment to P3.6 billion.

The first phase of the joint venture involves about 2.6 hectares and calls for the development of several projects including, "The Ranch," which offers luxury house and lot packages, and "Mandala Isle," which offers leisure farm lots.

The joint venture also includes the development of a market project, the Timberland Sports and Nature Club spanning 15,000 square meters. The exclusive club will offer nature-oriented amenities, spa, dining, banquet and swim facilities.

As part of the joint venture agreement, Africa Israel and FLI have agreed to consider pursuing the development of two exclusive residential projects in five unclassified zone in Metro Manila.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Tech, business gurus reach out

By Rica T. Olchondra

TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS AND business leaders will speak to an estimated 10,000 budding entrepreneurs, including hobbyists, during the two-day Tech-subtropics forum and expo, which opens today at the World Trade Center on Roxas Boulevard.

The program, which links entrepreneurs with government representatives, financial institutions and industry experts, is spearheaded by Jose Concepcion III, PJPM Corp. CEO and President, and Councilor for Entrepreneurship.

Among the large companies represented at the expo were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), Bell, Smart Communications (Smart Bro), Globe Telecom (Globe), Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Bayan Tel.

The Department of Science and Technology also contributed its support to the event.

Ramon Lopez of the BMB group said there were 150 booths just up by a mix of schools, government institutions, banks, microfinance agencies, science and technology experts and venture capitalists.

The links to be forged among exhibitors and visitors were expected to spin the local IT industry and help it establish businesses, grow, creating more jobs and a larger knowledge base for the country.

Hailing early promotions for the event, the organizers said Filipinos have so much talent, knowledge capabilities and passion for business but the applications and financial help available for putting up a growing businesses were not yet readily accessible to the public.

Those that were accessible were not well promoted among their target users.

Thus, representatives from the business sector, particularly those that can lend or extend/or some capital and technology, have agreed to showcase their services.

The TechnoSubtropics is the latest in the series of events organized by the PCE and Concepcion's effort to clinch up interest in entrepreneurship.

Previously, Entrepreneurship campaigns featured micro and small enterprises, the latest foundation conceptualized were geared for medium revenue Filipino workers and talented members of the military.

GMA credit program has BSP worried

Repeal of Estrada-era order may affect RP's fiscal gains

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) VOICED ITS CONCERN over the pending repeal of an Estrada-era executive order that legitimized all state-controlled credit programs in an effort to reduce the government's huge budget deficit at that time.

In a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo dated Sept. 8, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. noted that Malacañang's "unqualified" repeal of Executive Order No. 138 has rekindled fears that the government may once again "end up as primary source of financing for the poor."

Tetangco said that with the repeal, the country risks losing its "hard-won fiscal objective that has dramatically improved investors' perception of the Philippines."

The BSP chief said the government could best promote and entrust its gains in microfinance lending by maintaining a policy environment that would encourage private financial institutions to invest in and use the available pool.

"The assurance that the private sector can continue in this endeavor, save properly motivated, are likely to be made larger and more durable than when the government was to do so," Tetangco said.

Last Aug. 8, the President issued an order nullifying EO 138, which took effect on Aug. 12, 1999.

The rationale for the repeal was not properly explained by Malacañang. Economists, business leaders and even former economic managers who had helped craft EO 138 criticized the move.

The groundwork for EO 138—which aimed to curb the growing number of inefficiently managed government-funded credit programs, making it more cumbersome to create new ones—started during the administration, but it was signed only during the time of President Joseph Estrada.

"We are concerned that an inappropriately designed government program may end up compromising the stability of private investments and eventually lead to their disappearance," Tetangco said.

He then added that there was need to "establish in a comprehensive way the government's policy direction in this area to give proper guidance to the private sector, the donor community and other stakeholders."

Tetangco assured the President that the BSP would continue its efforts to promote the development of microenterprises within the banking sector.

Gov't help vital in revitalizing mining, says CMP

By Rommel W. Dominguez

THE CHAMBER OF MINES OF THE PHILIPPINES is optimistic on Wednesday reaffirmed its partnership with the government in promoting the industry, following a day-long international investment conference in the country.

CMP president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez said in a statement the group viewed the government's vision that mining activities should be done in accordance with best mining practices and in compliance with the country's mining laws.

Romualdez said that the CMP welcomed Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes' assurance that the government would remain steadfast in promoting environmentally sound mining activities.

Romualdez was referring to Reyes' remarks during the forum dubbed "Indaba in the Philippines Mining Conference" that was held at the Shangri-La Hotel last Sept. 12.

Investors from South Africa, Australia, Malaysia and other African nations attended the conference, which was held in the wake of the investments in Africa Mining Conference or Indaba in Cappetown, South Africa.

The investors are here on a two-day visit to check out where mining investments can be made, and to meet the local mining players.

"With Reyes' assurances, it is the Chamber's hope that the resources of mining potential will be unleashed, by law-abiding agro-complexities of mining power applicants with all the necessary requirements," Romualdez said.

"Streamlining of the bureaucracy is key in revitalizing the mineral sector as identified in the country's action plans," he added.

Also, Romualdez said CMP believed that "mining done right can give the Philippine economy a much-needed boost, while providing the Filipino people tangible benefits through job generation and the trickle down effect of mining related activities, like the construction of roads, schools and health centers in mining-zone areas."

The officials also said CMP welcomed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' policy to hunt out idle mining projects in those who have the capability and intend to make it be operational.

He said such a policy would allow those with deep pockets to participate in the development of mineral resources.

DOF opposes tax perks for special savings accounts

Incentives seen to cost government P13.6B in foregone revenue a year

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (DOF) has resisted tax cut appeals made by grant tax incentives to individuals who will volunteer some their own pension savings accounts.

The department said such a move would result in annual government revenue loss of around to P13.56 billion.

The planned granting of tax incentives to people who would have Personal Equity and Retirement Accounts (PERAs) was contained in two bills pending in the House of Representatives.

"Legislating Peras, with the tax benefits attached to it, at this time does not seem to be in tune with the concerted effort to bring down the country's fiscal deficit and achieve a balanced budget in the medium term," the department said in a position paper.

The bills, likewise, state that the amount of annual contribution will be excluded from the computation of one's gross income, therefore reducing his or her income tax liabilities.

The proposal is among the legislative measures being supported by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The BSP said the measure would encourage savings and inhibit the need for more borrowing to boost investments.

The pending bills hoped to help develop the country's healthier capital market through increased savings.

But such showed that the savings rate in the country was among the lowest in the region.

Official data showed that aggregate savings in the Philippines stood at 23.5 percent of gross domestic product in 2005. The point is comparison to Vietnam's 27 percent, Singapore's 32 percent, Taiwan's 25.6 percent, Malaysia's 46.1 percent and Thailand's 31.1 percent.

The DOF said that in principle, it supports the idea of encouraging individuals to limit their own retirement accounts, aside from what they have with the Social Security System or the Government Service Insurance System.

However, it stated from that the proposed Peras might not increase the income additional savings. Instead, the department said it might only encourage individuals to transform their existing savings accounts into Peras to avail themselves of the tax perks.

"We expect that savings in existing instruments will simply move to the new instruments but no new savings will be generated. As such, the savings level will still be the same and the original objective of the proposal will not be attained," the DOF said in the position paper.

Also, the department said the provision in the Peras bills allowing variable annuity rather than only interest rate now cleared in the record will now serve the purpose of encouraging savings for retirement.

"The general rule is that savings in tax privileged pensions schemes are locked-up for retirement, and no "loans-backs" are allowed because these does not benefit to be accountable with having a tax-preferred vehicle of long-term savings for retirement," the DOF said.

The DOF said the better way to encourage savings and develop the capital market was to rationalize the income tax system for financial services by making the tax burden equitable.

Working with the urban poor

Ayi Reyes-Hartt

COUNTLESS PEOPLE WERE HOPING while for the coming into being of the Technical Assistance Center for Development of Rural and Urban Poor (Tacdup), a nongovernment organization (ngo) in a position of leadership and at the fabrication of several major advocacy efforts—including those on political, economic, regional or sectoral forming, and even environmental protection all within the country of considerable diversity.

Starting as a small Davao-based NGO that committed to assist socioeconomic programs to improve the quality of life of the poor, the organization has transformed itself into a respected media known for its efforts in intervention and network building, advocacy on political and institutional reforms, and promotion of sustainable agriculture and organic farming.

My personal involvement in Tacdup started when I was invited to sit in their board two years ago because it needed an entrepreneurial person to provide more market opportunities for the products of their livelihood projects and programs.

Nature farming

Tacdup, under its Sustainable Integrated Area Development program, is engaged in organic inputs and food production. It is also active in the environment monitoring marine catches and vehicular emissions on the benefits of organic foods.

The use of its nature farming to the village systems promotes productivity, profitability and efficiency such issues as pesticide residues, soil erosion, and the minimization of artificially and socially available materials.

The system is now being used by more than 5,000 farmer beneficiaries in Davao City, Davao del Sur and Bukidnon provinces since 2002. In Davao City, the program operates along the watersheds slopes of Mt. Apo, which is geographically shared by Davao City and Davao del Sur and bounded by the Tibolo-Lipadas Mindanao river system. In Davao del Sur, the slopes is within the Mt. Apo, home of the Bagobo Tribo, while the other side is within the Mt. Matutum range, home to B'laan tribe.

Tacdup also assisted on the establishment of Mindanao Sugar Processing Plant in Bansalan, Davao del Sur in 2002. Mindanao sugar is an all-natural sugar. Unprocessed that is rich in minerals and minerals. The plant produces mills about 400 kilos/day or eight tons of sugar a month.

The project has helped many organic farmers use their poverty and lead them to freedom from indebtedness mainly through cravings on fertilizer cost. Sister using requires the farmers the sugarcane are more able to withstand strong winds. The quality of the soil also improved resulting in sweeter quality of the sugar.

The Mindi Garden Food Program is situated in the Lipanang Marsh forests of greater Davao. The mostly small a the main food pantries resource area of the local inhabitants, parts mainly the Magsaysay-to-Marilog. Its surroundings are considered the rice bowl of the country.

Perhaps the most interesting agronomic organic fertilizers and pesticides. A 2.5-liter/acre farm yields an average of 70-80 sacks of rice using the system. Just because farm must be researched no longer spend on chemical fertilizer.

The system has opened many opportunities for small farmers to change their economic situation. Their harvest has been steady and the cost of inputs has dropped. The environment is also being protected because of the use of organic inputs.

Interestingly, the technology is also being used in hog raising and has resulted in less stress respirations.

Another idea Inche is that the hogs have lesser mess and that they meet international standards. Hog raisers now earn 35 percent more and soldier farmer saves in feed components, and the building can be used to prevalence guide organic fertilizer.

In South Cotabato, Maguindanao & Sultan sees profit among the victims, while Cotabato river basin. The program has proved that Sultan and Cotabato can co-exist peacefully and become more progressive and environmentally viable despite their cultural differences.

What is more important is that Tacdup helps sell the products of the farmers and fisherfolk raises through its marketing unit, Mindanao Agri-Sidewalk Coop., which distributes all of these organic products—the brown rice, well-milled rice, muscovado sugar, fruits and vegetables, eggs and meat. These products are now available in major malls and stores around Davao City and in neighboring towns and municipalities.

The farmers are just too willing to plant more and increase their yield and Tacdup is now aggressively looking for new markets outside Mindanao. The strategy is to find viable distribution channels for these products in Manila and Cebu, where the food requirements of the "well-to-do and the consumer" sectors are growing everyday.

We are hoping that one day soon, we will find these Mindanao-organic food products in grocery shelves, health stores, spa and wellness centers, gourmet restaurants, and organic and specialty shops all over the country.

Ayi Reyes-Hartt is chair of Mindanawood Foundation, Inc. Email comments to pulitan2@yahoo.com

BIR . . .

From page B1

The BIR is the government's main source of revenue, accounting for about 80 percent of the total, for this reason, the BIR's performance has a big impact on the government's ability to meet its fiscal targets.

For this year, the government aims at reducing its budget deficit to P125 billion from last year's P146.9 billion.

The government is to tie to track its asset to deficit-to-duction target for the year despite the BIR's tax collection shortfall as of July.

USTH eyes medical tourism market

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS Hospital aims at converting a substantial share of the $1.3 billion medical tourism business with its P300-million Benedicto Cancer Institute project. The first of its kind in the country, which opened recently.

"The healthcare market is there. It's 67% percent of health care buyers in the Middle East, Europe and the United States are looking for cancer treatment. We are positioning ourselves as the center for cancer treatment in Asia where they can bring their patients," said Fr. Gerson H. Alliance, USTH president and CEO.

Alliance said the market potential was estimated at $1.3 billion, representing the annual medical travel budget of some 80 healthcare buyers that USTH management during the first medical healthcare fair held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Alliance said that Middle Eastern countries were spending some $700 million per year for medical travel. Saudi Arabia alone presents a major potential worth $225 million, especially during the medical travel fair for defense and diplomatic officials, as well as those for Saudi Aramco. Others in the region are the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Dubai, Bahrain, Egypt, Syria, Oman, Qatar, Turkey and Iran.

Countries in Eastern Europe are also on USTH's list of medical tourism prospects. According to Alliance, the medical travel budgets of Eastern European countries have been set up to $400 million. He said Russia and Latvia are the top prospects in this bloc, with medical travel budgets of $135 million and $100 million, respectively.

Russia and other Asian countries are also actively seeking cheaper ways to retrieve for their patients. With the formal opening of ICI last Aug. 21, USTH is well positioned to cater to the needs of these healthcare buyers.

Business, market split on economic prospects

From page B1

but affected the country's consumer base.

A survey released by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) earlier this month revealed that businessmen were "less optimistic" about the current quarter.

The BSP's latest level of optimism among businessmen was due to the continuing rise in oil prices arising from the conflict in the Middle East and higher labor costs due to the implementation of wage increases in both public and private sectors at the time the survey was conducted," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa C. Guinigundo said, explaining the results.

Chronic optimists, pessimists

How could two closely interrelated sectors simultaneously view the same subject—in this case, the country's economic prospects—so differently?

More importantly, which group has been consistently proved to be correct more often?

A look back at past current bank surveys, as well as those conducted by other institutions, reveals that the views of consumers and businessmen often diverge when queried about prospects.

People familiar with the method of bank groups believe this—farming economic situations—optimism is a natural trait of the consumer sector, while pessimism is inherent in businessmen.

"By nature, businessmen have to focus the sails-side of things," said Ben Ryden II, who is the president and CEO of property developer and management firm Ortigas & Co.

As the head of the firm that runs the Ortigas business district and the Greenhills shopping center, Ryden has a unique perspective on how members of both sectors think.

He believes that businessmen are "paid to get worried," especially in the present environment where economic conditions are only from satisfactory but also from the outside to economic players who are happy and, more often, more efficient. The number of looking for the most threat explains, in part, why business surveys always have a negative bias—even those of individual consumers.

"As a responsible CEO, the more [a businessman] is optimistic, the more he becomes suspect," Ryden said.

At the same time, he explained that the pessimism of the business sector was led, in part, by the concern need to report bad profit than actions to higher investors, whether they are shareholders or government regulators.

Changing preferences

At the other end of the spectrum, the Ortigas & Co. chief feels the reliance of clients showing increasing consumer confidence, but suggests that not to jump to conclusions' changing buying preferences.

"Consumers are changing their spending habits," he said, noting the rise of specialty-niche boutique-related products and services. "But the flow to specialties about other things worries them."

The diverging results of business and consumer confidence surveys do not make them useless or the source of confusion as long as they are interpreted properly, according to Makati Business Club executive director Guillermo Luz.

"Conflicting data is not less valuable," he said, explaining that both surveys can be helpful in helping to different sets of issues guide them in their economic decisions.

Like Dalisay, however, Luz urges an optimism as survey results showing increased consumer confidence.

"The best that consumers are still very pessimistic," he said. "While they may not spend toward the future, it seems that many are still looking back on spending."

Luz, whose group represents the country's largest business conglomerates, also said that pessimism in the business sector is still more likely to smaller firms which have limited markets compared to large firms which are better able to withstand difficult times.

Consumer power 'tempered'

But the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), the pessimism in the business sector is even more real. The group even suggests that higher consumer confidence is affecting local businesses in a negative way.

In an interview, PCCI president Donald Dee gave a compelling explanation as to why businessmen and consumers see the same issue differently.

"People have the buying power, but they're spending it all on imported goods," he said.

He pointed out that much of the $10.7 billion non-bank foreign exchange inward remittances by overseas Filipino workers are not entering the country again in local businesses spend them on consumer goods brought from abroad.

"If you look at the receipts, all the groceries they will [have to] buy [from] Hong Kong or Bangkok," Dee said. "That's why local businessmen are pessimistic. The optimistic consumers are using their purchasing power on all the wrong things."

Until either the businessmen adjust to the consumer change, both groups will continue to work on different pages of the same book, the PCCI official said.

Go after IPR violators, foreign experts tell RP

Protection seen growing 'new' economy

By Ronna F. Domingo

FOREIGN EXPERTS ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS urged local authorities to prove the presence of counterfeiting intellectual property rights violations.

Mihaly Ficsor, former assistant director general of the World Intellectual Property Organization, said stronger enforcement of IP rights through prosecution of cases was necessary to create a strong "knowledge" economy.

"In my country (Hungary), the core copyright industries account for some 4 percent of gross domestic product," Ficsor said. "If we include industries that indirectly benefit from copyright and trademark protection, that would be 7 percent to 8 percent."

He said the knowledge economy in Hungary—an upper middle income country—was more important than the power of food stocks in terms of contribution to national income.

Glenn Ko Jones, a senior fellow of the Singapore's IP Academy, said the contribution of IP-dependent firms to the city-state's income was at 6 percent, or half of that in the United States.

In the Philippines, the estimate is placed at 1 percent of between 4 percent and 10 percent, according to Intellectual Property Office Director General Ednaco E. Corrales Jr.

Corrales said there was yet no definite study on this but official claim there, for example, that software development registers about $300 million in sales a year, graphics design and animation, $30 million; music, conference and electronics, $24 billion; garments, $5 billion; furniture, $991 million.

The experts are stating the country is at a crossroads because data claimed "Copyright in the Knowledge Economy: Challenges Emerging Issues and Future Prospects."

The forum that will wrap up today at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel is a joint project of the Department of Trade and Industry and the US Department of Commerce.

Paul W. Jones, chairs of efforts at the United States Business, said Washington was particularly interested in seeing preservation of IP rights withdrawn in the months, especially since it is still number 1 US retail list of countries where the incidence of infringements were relatively high.

Corrales said the key to this was the IPO's partnership with the judiciary, which has agreed to hire part in a training program to subdue at least 20 court people.

He said the progress would start in October as part of efforts to set up special IP courts.

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Offshore banks' investments in bonds rise

By Doris C. Dumlao

OFFSHORE BANKERS CLOTH IS THE FIELD: poses invested more in bonds and other securities as of June this year compared to last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The BSP said there was a marked shift in the asset choice of the seven foreign banks with Philippine OBUs from loans and discounts to bonds and other securities, which now comprise the majority of their portfolio.

The seven's investments in bonds and other securities surged by 166.7 percent to $1.4 billion as of June.

This jacked up the share of investments in bonds to 53.4 percent of the OBUs' gross assets compared to only 37.5 percent a year ago.

On the other hand, loans and discounts were down 14.6 percent to $600 million during the same period, thus cutting the share in the portfolio to only 20.1 percent from 31.8 percent of total assets.

Unlike foreign banks with full branch licenses in the country, OBUs have limited banking functions.

While they are allowed to lend out, for instance, they cannot accept deposits from Philippine residents.

The seven OBUs are ABN Amro Bank NV, American Express Bank Ltd., BNP Paribas, Credit Lyonnais, Societe Generale, Taiwan Cooperative Bank and JP Morgan Int'l Finance Ltd.

GOINGS-ON

Proposal writing seminar set

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE "PROPOSAL Writing Conference" published by Nelson Bernal-Alpe Center Publishing (NBCP) is now available.

NBCP is also the publisher of the bestseller book called "Directory of International Funding Organizations, Nonprofit Organizations, NGOs, Corporate Donors, and Partnership Grants."

To learn more about proposal writing and [illegible] organizations, join the Winning Grant Proposal Writing Seminar today at Pinkville Hotel, 2000 Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Proposal writing hard practices, tips, hands, techniques and samples of approved proposals will be discussed during this seminar.

Speakers are Dr. Ponciano Bernardo, [illegible] Foundation Philippines; Ms. Emma de Leon, social development manager, Filipinas Shell Foundation Inc. and Tehani Bernal-Alpe, Center Publishing.

For inquiries, call 527-0884, 0919-229-8777, 0919-229-8580, and 0919-580-4279. Email address is [illegible] or visit us at [illegible].

Stocks . . . From page B1

2,400 points.

The composite index was 17.77 points to 2,379.43 after trading between 2,369.12 and 2,382.96. The broader all-shares index rose 6.15 points to 1,472.16.

Losers led, gods 69 to 40, with 52 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 3.84 billion shares worth P1.06 billion.

We said a new catalyst would be needed to breach through the 2,400 point barrier again.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone, the most actively traded stock, rose up P2.0 to P2,020.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.'s A shares rose cloudy at P9.6 as 43.8 shares rose 50 centavos to P71.50. AFP

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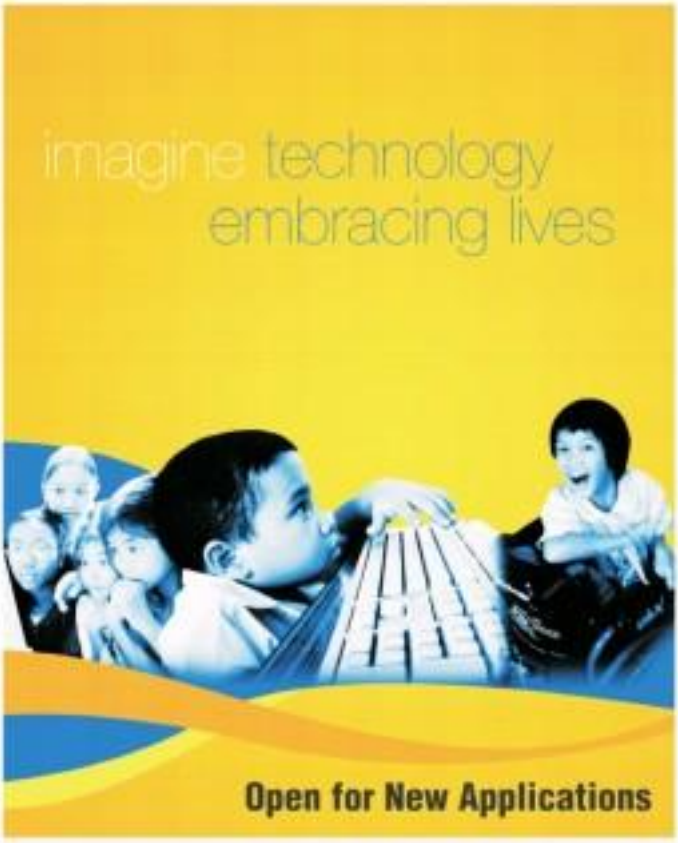

Samsung Digital Hope 2006

Samsung Digital Hope supports programs that help bridge the digital divide for youth and people living with disabilities helping them to enrich their lives and reach their dreams. All charities, educational institutions, youth and non-government organizations are invited to apply for monetary or product grants to help support on-going or new projects that adhere to the objectives of Digital Hope. To learn more about the program and to download application, visit www.samsung.com/ph/hope

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Oil bill hit $3.5B as of June

Volumes down as demand softens

By Abigail L. Ho

DUE TO HIGH INTERNATIONAL PRICES, the volume of oil imports dropped 3.1% percent in the first half.

But the country's oil import bill soared 22 percent to $3.5 billion in the same period.

According to data from the Department of Energy, local consumption of petroleum products declined by 0.6 percent, from 16.8 million barrels in the first half of 2005 to 11.6 million barrels in the same period this year.

On a daily consumption basis, this means a drop in average daily consumption to 284,500 barrels in the first semester from 114,130 barrels a year ago.

Despite the drop in import volumes, the January-June oil import bill of $3.5 billion was still higher than the $2.9 billion recorded in the same period last year, due to sustained high prices.

In a statement issued yesterday, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said high fuel pump prices had prompted consumers to scrimp on oil use, leading to a drop in local demand.

Local consumption, he said, was expected to continue shrinking, with the accelerated promotion and development of alternative fuels such as coco-biodiesel and ethanol-blended gasoline.

Based on DOE records, the country's daily oil consumption peaked in 1997 at about 401,000 barrels a day.

This dropped to 329,000 barrels a day in 2000, remarkably growing to only 284,500 barrels a day in the first half.

Last year, net oil imports also declined by 9.7 percent.

Nomura, DBS bullish on RP

By Michaela V. Ramos

FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRMS NOMURA Group and DBS Group have raised their economic growth forecast this year for the Philippines.

Nomura and DBS cited the sound-behaved jump in the country's export earnings, increase in remittances from abroad, and the stronger than expected economic performance in the first half.

Nomura raised its gross domestic product growth projection to 5.3 percent from 4.6 percent, while DBS adjusted its forecast from 5.1 percent to 5.5 percent.

The forecasts, however, are still lower than the government's 6.0% growth target this year of 5.5 percent.

"The main factor behind our revision is that exports of electronic products are increasing, spurred by the strong global demand for semiconductors," Nomura said in its quarterly assessment of Asia-Pacific economies.

"We are lifting our real GDP growth projection for the Philippines this year to 5.3 percent from 5.1 percent, after the economy performed better than we expected in the first half," DBS said on its latest paper on the Philippine economy.

The Philippines posted a GDP growth of 5.1 percent in the first half on the back of a double-digit rise in exports and recovery of the agriculture sector.

GDP is a statistic used to measure an economy's performance, is the sum of the goods and services produced in an economy in a given period.

Merchandise exports for the first seven months of the year hit $26.692 billion, representing a 16.2 percent rise from export earnings recorded in the same period a year ago.

The double-digit rise in exports prompted economic officials to adjust the exports growth target to 10 percent, which they said was still a conservative figure.

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WERDAM

Nights of fine dining, days of cooking lessons

By Michaela Perez

CHEF Stefan Trapp shows how to plate duck confit with vanilla thyme chutney.

VERY QUIETLY, THE Mandarin Oriental Manila has been holding a wine dinner every last Friday of the month for four years now. Held at the Tiroli, the hotel's signature restaurant, "Nights of Wine and Fine Dining" offers a seven-course meal paired with featured wines.

The wines, by the way, are unlimited or "bottomless," in the parlance of the San Juan scene.

The latest of this monthly feature was no opportunity as well, to introduce the new sous chef, Stefan Trapp, who has been here for only a few months. It was also an occasion to introduce one of the wine masters of the Grand Duego Vilmen as of Australia, among the guests in the events "Dana 2006," the annual wine tasting event of Wine Depot, a wine distributor.

Craig Stanborough gave guests this evening an idea of where the Grand Duego Vilmens are. Drawing what he hoped looked like Australia, he showed where the Barossa and Eden valleys were in the southeast part of the country.

Barossa is one of the most favored locations for wineries. Stanborough said it was where vegetables were once planted by mostly German immigrants who settled there.

Prime location

He said, "Think heavens the grapes were sun." And some those valleys are prime places for growing vines.

The Eden Valley Riesling 2006 right away pointed to the German immigrant history of the place. It was light and perfect for the citrus-heavy seafood.

Trapp identified himself right away as a chef to watch out for with the very first course—pan-fried prawn ravioli, delicate layers of prawns with smoked salmon mousse and lava caviar (salmon roe). It came on a teaspoon, beautiful to behold and a winner in both flavor and texture.

Another amuse bouche was served, a terrine where the different layers consisted of confit of chicken leg and foie gras served with a mango praline and a fiery spice chutney. Mind the last word as a hint, the new way to pronounce a sauce is much nicer and, some say, much more conversational in flavor. We seem to have another foam later.

The Eden Valley and Adelaide Hills Chardonnays 2004 was tasted before the second course was brought in. It had a delightfully aromas of oak. While some wineries make it a point to say their chardonnay is un-oaked, the Grand Duego has kept the oak. It was served with the lobster cream brûlée, a cool dish (soup if you will). Trapp said he would have wanted it to be a bit flatter.

The next mushroom ravioli was served next with a Cameron Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2003, a very light red.

Palate cleanser was an interesting sorbet ginger sorbet. We all looked at each other as we were reminded of sake.

Then served is a veal tenderloin with medallion with a foam of creamed parsnips, green pea and sage, every ingredient contributing to the total taste and yet keeping the flavors separate. The wine was The Holy Trinity Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre 2001.

Then is as identified with Australia. The trinity for really refers to the three grape varieties combined to make the wine. How lively depends on the drinker.

Into our sixth course of crispy fried goat cheese with a salsa of tomato and basil, any flavored red wine was served. It was Filicifi Shiraz 2003. I have expensive tastes because this is an expensive shiraz from Grant Burge.

A warm chocolate fondant capped the dinner. The fondant was served with a white chocolate ice cream and a powdered chocolate facsimile of the Mandarin Oriental logo. A fitting, filling end until the cooking lessons conducted by Chef Trapp a few days after.

DELICATE layers of calmon, roe and potatoes

A monthly event at Mandarin is a 'class' in good food and wine pairing

LOBSTER a bisque to dine

Three recipes in two hours

The lessons took less than two hours and pre the chef seem enough there recipes all with Asian influence. He is Indian and that is his first job in Asia. He says his knowledge of the spices and way of cooking comes from his chef and other co-workers in his two previous assignments, California and the (Iraq) al Arab in Dubai.

Like most good chefs, he made the cooking lessons seem easy. The salmon ceviche is for take on the timbre, only this time, the fillet is marinated for at least four hours in a coconut milk mix full of flavors from chili, coriander, lemon grass, lime and ginger juice. He served it with a mango salsa.

Main course was a confit of duck with a vanilla thyme chutney. His technique included soaking the duck skin with a slow torch, simmering the duck covered with fat and many herbs and spices. His presentation had the confit on a bed of cherry and served with a ginger-glazed green pechay.

Finally, he cooked a pannine crème brûlée with a lotus paste ice cream. The crème brûlée was cooked on a Asian scent, the tops are vanilla sour cherry glaze.

But the best cooking tip was how to tell if the ice cream maker had the right consistency. He dipped a wooden spoon into the mixture then took it out and blew into it. The ice showed in a form shaped like a rose. Where that appears then the next step to the ice cream machine.

We did get to eat what we prepared that day, complemented by wines that head waitress Gail Gonzales announced. So, for our entrée, we had a pinot gris, Eden Valley 2006 from New Zealand. For the entrée it was a light Beaujolais Cruise, St. Leger, Burgundy 2005. And our dessert was served with a riesling, Late Harvest Columbia Crest, USA 1998.

Expect cooking classes on Oct. 25 featuring the Tirolí's executive chef on Nov. 28, Christmas dishes. The cooking classes are exclusive of lunch and offered at P1,500+.

Singapore food festival

HEAVEN 'N Eggs offers all-time favorite Manila Spanish-ish and LSI Top Blade Steak with eggs, LPS Ala Kapon with eggs, Country-fried steak, Grilled Pork Chops, Tuna steak and more. Different kinds of pancakes are also available. Heaven 'N Eggs branches are in EXB Bldg., Tomas Morato, QC; G/F Sherbetia-1, Puente Circle, Eastwood City; and Pasay Market! Market! Call 3762674 or 8182792.

DINING OUT

MANILA Pavilion
Hotel property "the Best of Sabah" this September. Chicken, include Smoked Salmon, Marinated Salmon, Scallopini Salmon, Fried Salmon, Steamed Salmon and Grilled Salmon. Lunch is 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m. and dinner, 6:30–10:30 p.m. Call 5057171 local 7505.

GALILEO will be offering every day an al fresco breakfast buffet at the poolside of The Manhattan Plaza, the newest hotel in Ortigas Center. Buffet breakfast, served 6:30 a.m., will cost P551 net per person. For reservations, tel. 6350900, or visit www.quarterhotelphs.com.

SINGAPORE Bistro's Parisian-Japanese restaurant offers the Magnificat set this September, for only P1,188+. The complete Japanese meal includes appetizer, side dish of tofu steak, three main dishes, paired with Parisbasti's Seafood fried rice, as well as miso soup and green tea ice cream. Also available are fried Japanese oyster for P1800, and fried egg shabu for P1800+. Call 5250000.

HUGA-HUGA Seafood and Barbecue House (Malugay, Filinvest City) offers Grilled Prawns. Also on the menu, among others, are Inland Sushi selections, Island Curry Plates and Island cocktails. Call 771-2291 to 2389.

BLACKBEARD'S Seafood Island Restaurant (at Fiesta Market! Market!, Fort Bonifacio Global City; and Shoppesville Arcade, Asiatown Center, Cubao) offers Oysters Mariners and Pesto Rice Oysters. The restaurant also has Boodle Feasts meals that come complete with rice and grilled seafood selections. Elsewhere's Prize includes Crispy Coco-Jet Shrimps, Sun Mig Clams, Grilled Tilapia, Squid, Lulig, Steamed Crab, Grilled Lisenpo, and Kalkag rice. Also on the menu are Magellan's Landing, Boracay's Feast, Manila Bay Boodle, Bacon and All-Crab Boodle, among others. Call 911 1373 or 886 7693.

An abbreviated course on 'halal'

Panel page 01

circumcision of dip

1 tsp garlic, pounded to a paste, optional

1/3 chopped onion

1/3 c mayonnaise, preferably homemade (don't use sandwich spread or the sweet-ish kind)

1/3 c parmesan cheese

2 tsp onion powder

2 tsp garlic powder

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce, optional

Onion and garlic salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

Combine ingredients. Mix well. Season to taste with salt, pepper and onion or garlic powder. Make dip at least one hour before serving. Serve cold. For presentation, you may hollow out a ripe piece of bread and pre-dip.

Serve with crackers, toasts, vegetable crudites/vegetable sticks.

If you want it light, omit mayonnaise and use light sour cream all the way. The kind of sour cream and mayonnaise used will affect the end product. My favorite sour cream is Bulla. As for mayonnaise, I always make my own.

Would you have a great and easy biscuit recipe to share?

JOANNE LABRADA-ARGUELLES

Joanne dear, thank you so much for enjoying Kitchen Basics! Yes, I do have an easy biscuit recipe. It is delicious and it is. Enjoy!

½ c butter

3/4 c brown sugar

½ c white sugar

1 tbsp lemon coffee

2 eggs

2 tsp vanilla

2 c all-purpose flour

1½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ c chocolate chips or ½ c white chocolate chips or 1 c of your chip of choice

½ c chopped nuts of choice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream butter, brown and white sugar, and coffee in a mixer for five minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat for three minutes.

Add vanilla. Add flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg; mix until well blended. Fold in nuts and chocolate.

Roll into a baton, like French bread. Bake for 30 minutes. Slice diagonally.

For crispier biscuit, cobake for 10 minutes.

If you wish, melt bittersweet chocolate over a double boiler and dip one portion so half will be coated in chocolate.

Lay on a rack until chocolate sets.

E-mail the author at cupcake@inquirer.com.ph.

A French classic

RED RIBBON INTRODUCES its newest cake creation, Chocolate Marjolaine, a multi-layered meringue cake with nuts and chocolate that traces its origins to France.

The cake was originally the masterpiece of the late chef Armand Arnal, owner of France's La Pyramide restaurant. It became so popular that, up to now, chefs all over the world continue to follow and serve the world-renowned pastry.

Red Ribbon adds a twist to the classic cake by coating each of the six layers of meringue wafers with lightly sweet and luscious praline cream and premium chocolate. The cake is then adorned with roasted hazelnuts and more rich chocolates—chocolate chips, shavings and a crown of chocolate.

MARJOLAINE Cake

Chocolate Marjolaine has a different mouth feel, treating your taste buds to a flavor of flavors. You can savor every succulent with each bite.

Visit the Red Ribbon outlets nearest you or call its delivery hotline, 7431111.

BSP coins a new program

By Linda B. Bolido

COMMUTERS probably do not know it, but the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board has issued a memorandum circular in June that "requires all transport groups to support the National Coin Recirculation Program of the BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)" by accepting coins as payment from passengers.

The circular, signed by chair Blesie Rhea Strabilla and members Gerardo A. Peril and Ma. Elsie Bergo-Calanza, asks directly public utility vehicles (PUVs) to give passengers their exact change.

What the circular means, according to the BSP, is PUVs cannot refuse to accept five and 10 centavo coins. In fact, no establishment can refuse to accept these coins.

But the problem is as much the commuter/consumer as drivers and conductors/establishments.

Irony

It is ironic that in the affluent United States, Japan and European countries, people carefully save their coins, regardless of denominations, and confidently use them to pay for purchases and services without worrying that they would be refused.

Also in competing country, many people in those places would give the exact amount—if 5 percentage of the bill is specified as tip—or the last cent, yen or pence.

Somebody told me that the Chinese also had a lot of respect for coins because they were found at ways a lucky charm in feng shui.

And yet many Filipinos are too embarrassed to be seen holding the tiny one, five or 10 centavo coins in supermarkets and department stores, they believe like they are being insulted when cashiers give them these coins.

Even most banks, people who often don't have two pennies to rub together throw coins away like trash. You can see these coins on the streets and sidewalks.

I have heard shoppers suggest that establishments round off their prices so they will not have to give those coins. Well, I have seen for those people if establishments round off their prices, they are not going to do so at 4 hour to them. It will only mean more profits.

The fines will not roll a product that should really cost P10.10 go to taxes, profit markup, etc., for P10. If it will round off the price, it will most likely charge P10.25 or even P11.

If, on a given day, 1,000 shoppers refuse to take a five centavo coin, that will mean P50 that goes back to the store. In 30 days, that will mount to P1,500.

Respect the coin

The BSP's National Coin Recirculation Program aims to change this attitude toward coins. Under the program, if people don't want their round cents of things for change, they can at least give them to institutions that do, like schools and churches.

After all, when put together, these cents, from and cents add up to some very significant figures that can help schools buy much-needed supplies or support the church's charity work.

Whether people choose to use the coins to pay for purchases or donate it to a school or church, they still stand to benefit from the savings generated by keeping the metal currency in circulation. Minting one coin costs much more than its face value. A five centavo coin probably costs 10 centavos to make.

Even affluent countries with-drawn old coins only gradually because of the cost involved in replacing every piece that is taken out of circulation. Time to strip the same denomination can come in different sizes and shapes, having harmonized at different times—all of them legal tenders.

Some people may ask why make coins at all, since they seem to be unwanted. One reason coins are better than paper bills is they last longer so they do not have to be replaced often.

And then, as I have already mentioned, they help keep prices within reasonable limits. Rounding off prices will set benefit consumers.

Do you really want establishments to earn more than they do now simply because you don't want those coins? Remember, not everyone pays current taxes on their earnings as you base on two months—you pay more than you should for your purchases and the government gets less money for the work it has to do.

Our regular columnist, Marsiera V. Divas, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 12th Floor, Media Plaza, 1 Ortigas Ave. Extension, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.—Editor

Grill resto opens two more branches

FORMALITY opening Dencio's at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga are Robinsons Malls general manager Milo Maga and San Fernando Pampanga Mayor Oscar Rodriguez.

DENCIO'S SAM & GRILL restaurant has opened in Robinsons Place Dumaguete and Robinsons Starmills Pampanga.

Dencio's, which specializes in Filipino cuisine, particularly grilled dishes, is at the upper ground floor of Fortuna Studios of Robinsons Place Dumaguete.

In Pampanga, the restaurant is at the ground floor of Robinsons Starmills. Dencio's branches in Pampanga include Bing, Krispy Pata, Sari-Saring Sinugba and other Filipino specialties.

The two new branches are open until 11 p.m. Live acoustic bands are featured on selected days of the week.

With maximum seating capacity of over a hundred, Dencio's can also be a venue for private functions and parties. It offers catering services and special food packages at reasonable prices. Contact Dencio's at Robinsons Place Dumaguete at (035) 4226898 and at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga at (045) 4751111.

Test your skills as a wise shopper

SHOPPERS CHALLENGE SHOPpers to try their buying skills in its Stuff and Save Promo.

Until Oct. 8, Stuff and Save Promo bags will be on sale at P5 each in all Shoprite branches. All participating bags stuffed inside the bag will get a 20 percent discount.

Why shoppers can fill their Stuff and Save bag with items such as men's, ladies' and children's apparel, toys, kitchenware and kitchen linens, bed and bathroom items, home furnishing and decor, phones and home organizers.

The bags are available to shoppers who will use them will be doing their part to protect the environment by reducing the use of plastic bags.

The challenge is for consumers to put as many items in the bag without breaking it. Shoppers are invited to devise their own strategies to stuff the most number of items in the bag. The more items are stuffed, the more savings the shopper gets.

All bags are available until Oct. 31.

Shoprite has branches in Boni Tarnate, Makati, Libis, QC; Metropolis City; Harrison Plaza Mall, Pasay; Rajamall, Alabang; and Imarpe, Cavite, Cubao.

English high tea, Filipino style

COUNTRY COOKING

Wacky Tevez

AFTER TOSSING OUT its 4:30PM tea ritual, how our British hosts have lovingly become Filipino cooking: a tweaks-recipe are already being taken to comedy class.

It started out that Filipino high tea was introduced recently at the Makati Shangri-La Lobby Lounge. The English high tea is equivalent to our merienda, the afternoon repast.

But, unlike the English style where the food consists of small sandwiches, scones and tea cakes, Filipino merienda can consist of heavier fare, though in smaller portions. Some of these are noodles like pancit and even pares (the Filipino spaghetti), rice cakes, ice cream, local pastries and cookies and cake dishes, such as the animal's delay to get until pancit pancitan.

Light fare

The Filipino high tea we had at the Makati Shangri-La had relatively lighter fare. Perhaps it was to blend with the plentiful sumptuous pastries on display in the garden. Claude Tayag's "Petra" series, a melange of colored figures and miniature finds pieced on trellis.

Oh dear, here we whipped a tea on at the English do. That day, as requested, Chloe set aside by Mad pastel was used. The big teapot on steel rather suitable chocolate.

I didn't get to taste the latter but for keeping it benign to the Filipino character by being made from rice but includes cubits made from a knife.

While being thankful that Filipino food is now featured, I still want them with a critical eye. And so the first time of the debugging, placed on the very top layer, was to see if it was the real thing. Their choice because it was, it wasn't pancake but debugging. You could tell they used rice flour by the texture of the inside, less fine and with no pockets.

Executive chef Christopher Rutstein and chef used to serve lobsters at Galileo, the buffet area of the hotel. Some customers told him it wasn't authentic and so used lobsters was bought from an outside source so they would know what it was they made it to.

Family recipes

The cakes interesting story to how the recipes first found its way into the menu. Filipina Cortez, vice president and general manager of the hotel, wanted Filipino food to be served but using recipes from families, from grandmothers and grandparents.

That's when the recipe approach. Who better to teach the right techniques than those who have been cooking the dishes for years and who learned them from mothers and aunts? A consistent control and those that were approved were on the menu that same day.

Two of those grandmas were also talking their Filipino high tea that day. They introduced themselves as Tita Rosie and Tita Cookie Lanuza of Sta. Filomena, Urdaneta, Pangasinan. Their sister, Marissa Dominguez, is the hotel's service leader at the Lobby Lounge, a member of the committee.

Their recipe secret, something that was more to me and in terms of to them: it's a crepe made of cornstarch, flour and eggs, topped with a mixture of freshly grated coconut and sugar cheese cheddar.

While the taste was there, both grandmas said it should have been made thinner to make smaller rolls. For it is usually served on special days like Christmas.

The Lanuza sisters said they learned how to cook from their aunts and their mother. Their family loved to entertain and so the cooking was necessary. They recalled some of the other food their kitchen produced... pargoya, San Nicolas cookies, all kinds of bakeries, pastel, relleno, embutido.

When they talked about the antiquated utensils of their mother, Soledad Concepcion Lanuza, they mentioned two things to keep in mind: serving twelve triple mixtures of flavors and serving sugar eight to a custom right now of the banana leaf wrapping.

Documentation

How lucky does that the families tapped for this Filipino high tea still have a documentation for their recipes.

The day we were there, we had pitchfork for pork, a mix of cream broiler that's made with carabao's milk, made sweetness with sheep and topped with lard. The same is Pampanga for leave-leave texture, a beaten dough consistency, the mixture vibrates slowly when moved.

There was excellent mayonnaise with mushrooms inside and a delightfully crunchy crust. The next thing and a group customer, was making in the mixture advanced making.

Mango is cube-banana coated with banana, was served with a light cross and sweet is wasn't the finger shaped cut of my grandmother's mama's other but somewhat wasn't family mayonnaise than was.

Palitaw, then flavoured rice loaves cooked in boiling water then rolled in sugar, sesame seeds and grated coconut, was also quite delicious.

LAYERS of Filipino merienda: bibingka, empanada, pares and mamon

LYDIA and Nene Lanuza of Sampaga, Pampanga, contributed their pulico recipe.

WOOD SCULPTURE: Claude Tayag's garden sculptures of pares-sisters

TEXTURE: Bibingka was a pastry, homemade mamon and yellow rolls of pulico

The spread included merienda—carabao's milk mayonnaise pan and queso de bola.

But, unlike English tea where the cakes are sweet but dry for calorie cold, Filipino bubbles to stay and down. Anything fried becomes limp and oily. There should be a way to keep those textures, especially when you have tea with friends and don't want to pass on and on.

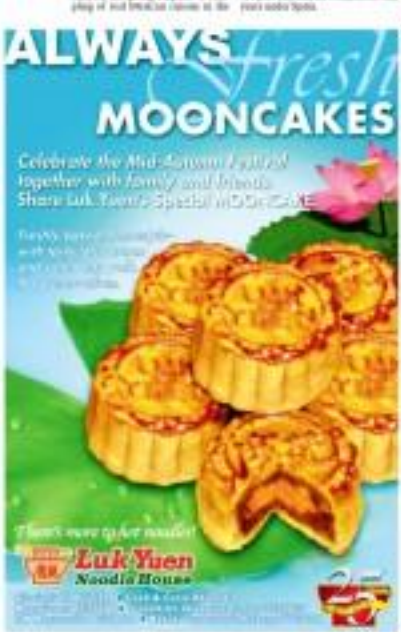
Someone suggested serving them in steamers. But when happens to the bread, the dough used, especially that tickle of love of my Brown aquatica yellow bark pound?

For this Filipino digression, it was a perfect choice because it evoked a garden during our tea when the rain it will lighten down to our goodbye.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood@yahoo.com

Showcasing the exotic and intense flavors of Mexican cuisine

GREEN Ceviche Shrimp



Green Ceviche Shrimp

Serves: 5 persons

Ingredients:

- 2 fillet fish, cleaned and marinated
- 120 g shrimps
- 120 g squid, cut dried
- 120 g mussels, cleaned and marinated
- 100 g white onion, julienne cut
- 100 g green cucumber, julienne cut
- salt and pepper to taste
- 10 ml lemon juice
- 20 ml lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste
- 10 ml cilantro

Procedure:

1. Cook all the shellfish in boiling water with lemon, salt and white wine. Drain.
2. In a separate pot, infuse the cucumber in boiling water with lemon. Drain.
3. In a bowl, put all the shellfish and add the remaining ingredients plus the cucumber. Fusion.
4. Serve with crackers or tostadas chips.

Tilapia Mia Monterrey Style

Serves: 5 persons

Ingredients:

- 200 g chicken breasts, cut fajitas style
- 100 g fillet of beef, cut fajitas style
- 100 g white onion, julienne cut
- 100 g red bell peppers, julienne cut
- 100 g green pepper, julienne cut
- 50 g sabaw cachuete paste
- 50 g lemon juice
- 5 ml olive oil
- 50 g garlic (for boiling)
- 100 g white onion, julienne cut
- 200 g green pepper, julienne cut
- 100 g red bell pepper, julienne cut
- 50 g habanero leaves, smoked

Procedure:

1. Blend the sabaw paste with onion, garlic, salt and lemon juice. Season well.
2. Slice the banana leaves on a grill.
3. On the heated banana leaves, put the fillet of fish with the onion, green pepper and olive oil. Cover the banana leaves and bake at 350°F in the oven for 40 minutes.
4. Serve with corn tortillas.

"Tsian Xia" Style Fish

Serves: 5 persons

Ingredients:

- 500 g fillet of fish
- 1 bottle dark beer
- salt and pepper to taste
- 5 ml olive oil

Procedure:

1. Marinate fish with beer, salt and pepper. Season well.
2. Preheat pan (if not) hot and put little olive oil.
3. Add the onion and sauté well with the vegetables mix for 1 minute.

Pot Chee

Serves: 5 persons

Ingredients:

- 500 g pork chuck
- 100 g soy sauce
- 100 g tomato
- 200 g red onion
- 10 g coriander, chopped finely
- salt for marination

Procedure:

1. Marinate the pork with soy sauce and salt for an hour.
2. Cook the meat in the grill.

For the Sauce:

1. Bake the tomato and red onion in 200 degrees pre-heated oven for 15 minutes.
2. Subsequently, blend the tomatoes and the onion.
3. Finally, mix the tomatoes with the blended tomato and diced onion and season with salt.

PGC Chee

ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Zulueta G. Velasco

Send feedback: inquirer.entertainment@gmail.com to LITO ZULUETA and ORLY TARUC or send them at pi_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

GRAND CHAMPS: Baguio-based Hambebelegg won P800,000 in cash, among other prizes

THOSE young rock enthusiasts came from all over the metropolis and beyond. Many were not going to let anything raincloud-like dampen... ANJAY

Can't wash away Muziklaban

Who would have dared wallow in the muddy swamp that was the band competition's rained-out venue?

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

THE RAINS FELL HARD DURING the wee hours of the night, turning the wide open field fronting the Bonifacio Global City Center at the SM Complex into a muddy swamp that only rainbow trout could have loved.

But that was the scene of the 2006 Red Horse Muziklaban Rock Challenge finals, an event that suffered bad publicity last year due to a stampede at the same venue—Fort Bonifacio—that resulted in the death of two women.

This time, a huge contingent of cops and bouncers made sure the expected thousands behaved. Before reaching the entrance gate, one was made to traverse a long walkway that had several "checkpoints." Minors and those who appeared too intoxicated were asked to step aside and forget about watching the gig.

Nothing is beyond that was a breeze.

Hard hand Mapasasaan was playing when we arrived past 8, and the audio quality was near-perfect even from the back rows. But seeing the action onstage was impossible. Large rubber ponchos covered the open field were useless. Lurking my way to the front, I was discouraged by two 17-year-olds who said it was too dirty for comfort, anyway—they had tired dancing but their feet had sunk to the mud.

Groove shelter

They were getting wet and cold, the two self-proclaimed punks maintained, could they share my umbrella? Then lead vocalist with a whole gang from Muntinlupa, they said, each "d' will chooses who finished to concerts wherever possible.

For Muziklaban they had arrived early afternoon, paid P300 each at the gate. They'd had their fun, and it didn't let bad spoiled the promise of all-night fun.

Behind us, some kids had stripped naked and were frolicking in the rain a la Woodstock. The scene provided an unnerving spotlight for those at the back who seemed content to just listen and drink their beers. Right beside us, three friends who said they were punks, too, but from Laguna, were dancing each other with beer, apparently drunk and determined not to let anything dampen their spirits.

"Ang dapat kasi, di kayo umuulit sa mid-semester," shouted Jaime Bautista back to someone. Kevin Roy from the stage.

Another guest band, MIL desperately opened dynamics between songs. "Are you a restless eyes." the vocalist roared, "before we start you?"

I asked my newfound punk friends if they ever did drugs. "Hindi po," they

GARY MARK SO

MMFF launches digi-docu contest

By Reuyal Sun Diego Jr.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) has launched a digital documentary competition dubbed "Pelikulaw: ... Rebolusyon ng Pelikulang Pilipino."

The contest has two categories, tackling two topics: history of Philippine cinema and history of the MMFF.

In a letter addressed to media, Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority which runs the MMFF, said the competition's goal is "to increase the level of public awareness on the MMFF and Filipino movies in general."

Behind it project requirements are representatives of the film-original broadcasters of the film-based Bro Gandingan, president of Movie Industry Anti-Piracy Organization; Leo Martinez, director general of Film Academy of the Philippines; and Rondi Avendaño, executive director of Manila Theater Foundation (Metro Rizal).

In a phone interview, Rita told Inquirer Entertainment that the contest is for students from field.

"This was made possible through his initiative. He wants to make the MMFF open to kids."

MARY SO

FINAL DECISION: Sunny Lee, Gilby Clarke and Jason Newsted choose the best man for their new band today on "Rock Star: Supernova," Star World, 8 a.m. The four remaining contenders are (clockwise from above left) Lukas Rossi, Dileas Rebelution, Toby Rand and Magti Ragsterson. Prime-time replay at 8 p.m.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
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Cinema 2000 Robinsons Ermita
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Cainta
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Las Piñas
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Novaliches
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Pampanga
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Iloilo
Cinema 2000 Robinsons Cebu

FOOTBOT — BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABAÑA

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY — BY PHIL LUMICAO

NUTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

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ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LUIS GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN MANLAPAZ

BIRD MACHINE — BY MANIX ABREN

MANOBOSHOE — BY JOHNO TUJOO

TULOOK — BY PAPI LIMO TATUM PALAMBRANG

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Victor Fleming
Lilian Reed, AM

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

		1	6	2		5		
			1					
4			8					3
						1	3	9
3								6
8	5	6						
7					1			8
					2			
		4		9	8	6		

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	9	3	5	6	4	7	2	8
3	4	2	1	7	8	9	5	6
7	6	5	9	8	2	3	1	4
6	2	7	4	1	5	8	9	3
9	5	1	3	2	6	4	8	7
4	8	3	7	9	5	6	2	1
2	3	9	6	4	1	5	7	8
5	1	4	8	3	9	2	6	7
8	7	6	2	5	7	1	3	9

Difficulty: ★★★

Conceptis Puzzles, Box 52, Bolton, Ontario, L7E 5T2

MMFF launches digi-docu contest

From page B1

president Binnakaye and documentarian by encouraging Cinemalaya participants to enter the annual Documentary event. At the same time, we are highlighting the pioneers of the MMFF and local movie industry," Ilon said.

The new contest aims to "promote independent short films and documentaries alongside the mainstream and commercial fare usually associating the MMFF," Ilon added.

The contest is open to all Filipinos, except to known members and their relatives (first degree of consanguinity). The digital filmmakers who submit entries in the following formats: straight documentary, docu-drama or docu-musical (music video), with maximum running time of 20 minutes.

Among the requirements are: bio and profile of the artists; synopsis; copy of script or sequence treatment; budget breakdown; technical and creative staff/cast information; director's or producer's contact information; and a short video presentation of the entry.

Deadline for submission of requirements is last week of September. Winners are to be announced in the MMFF awards show on Dec. 20.

Ilon said Fernandez had suggested that the grand prizes for each category be increased from P500,000 to P600,000.

"We will also be awarding four honorable mention prizes that come with P50,000 each for the two categories. That's P1 million in total. As bonus, the two winning docus will be blown up to 70mm film, to be shown in theaters along with the MMFF entries," she said.

From 1992 to 1994, the MMFF similarly came out with a short-film component, under the auspices of Manunblad. Among the short films produced then were: Emmanuel Dariday' 'Anak Alaysa,' Mark Meer-angco's "Anak," Lore Quinto's "Hesukristo," Joey and Baby Aglaya's "Nagbisaya."

BATMAN Fernandez

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Tagaytay

ROUNDUP

'The Covenant' top draw in US, Canada this week

LOS ANGELES—"The Covenant," a tale of supernatural teens trying to destroy each other at an elite boarding school, hit the top of the weekend box office with a $15 million take, according to studio estimates.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official business:

1) "The Covenant," $16M; 2) "Hollywoodland," $6M; 3) "Barnyard," $5.8M; 4) "The Protector," $5M; 5) "Crank," $4.8M; 6) "The Ilusionist," $4.6M; 7) "Little Miss Sunshine," $4.4M; 8) "The Wicker Man," $4.3M; 9) "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby," $3M; 10) "Barnyard: The Original Party Animals," $2.6M. AP

HAHA Herne

Star City opens

On its opening weekend, Sept. 15 and 17, Star City gives patrons a P50-off from the regular price of Php 400 ten Carnival rides.

On its opening day, a free concert will be staged featuring teen idols Jennylyn Mercado, Mark Herras and Dexter Doinog and pop bands Rivermaya and Parokya ni Edgar.

The theme park, open from 4 p.m. on weekdays and 1 p.m. on weekends, is located at the CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

'Twilight' gets R-18

The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) has rated the film "Twilight Dancers" R-18, after the producers agreed to make certain deletions on its second and final review.

Directed by Mel Chionglo, the adult film, which had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in Sept. 8, was initially rated X by the board's first review committee.

The second committee also found the film "unfit for public viewing" on X-rated and recommended the wholesale deletion of several scenes.

The seven-TV board's second review committee consisted of voice Alfred Vargas, actor Jackie Aquino, critic Isabel Hernando, actress-director Annette "Boots" Barretto and lawyer Lorene Alegre.

"Among the deleted scenes were the make-over, the audition set and frontal nudity of male strippers," said Dante Mendoza of Cinema Stage, the film's producer.

"Those were the same scenes that the first committee had found objectionable," said board chair Marissa Laguardia, quoting the first committee's report.

With the R-18 rating, Mendoza is confident the movie's mostly-amateur cast, Direk Rolando Gallenzi and theatrical run (on Sept. 20) will go as scheduled. Reported Sun Diego Jr.

Piracy case

The Movie Industry Anti-Piracy Organization (MAPO) reported the filing of a case against suspected film pirate Imelda Hernandez by the Taytay City police.

Mary Steph, MAPO vice chair, said Hernandez was allegedly caught videotaping Star Cinema's "Inlab" at Gateway Mall 2 of Araneta Center Mall in Barangay Socorro, Quezon City, on Aug. 13.

He added that the movie's producer would also file a case against Hernandez, who had been allegedly caught by personnel of Ariel Abadilla, aided by federal agents.

MAPO and the National Cinema Association of the Philippines (NCAP) have joined a memorandum of agreement to intensify their anti-piracy campaign, setting up a reward system for slow theater personnel that will turn over suspected pirates.

Mr. Cunningham, president of MAPO and NCAP, said "We are pressured are the first line of defense ... providing incentives for them will strengthen the anti-piracy campaign."

'CamePlan'

"CamePlan" goes to the Manila Yacht Club this week to unite to the winners and spread the advocacy with members of Sailability Philippines.

It checks on Oberto Pinpin's performance in the Women's Intercollegiate sailing competition held at the Tail Lake Yacht Club.

The sports magazine show also challenges members of the Manila Junior Jaycees to a game of basketball.

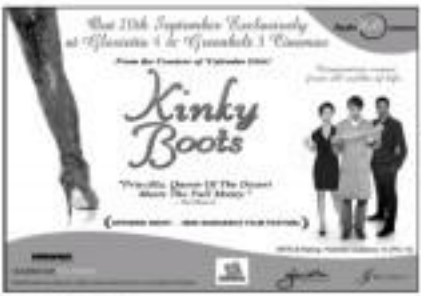
The episode airs on Sept. 17, 1:30 p.m. on Studio 23.

'Maxima' screening

Sing Sophiology at the Maxima Theater, the Philippine entry to the 2007 Oscars, will be commercially shown in local theaters on Sept. 20.

United Pictures and its sister company, Optima Digital, have remastered the film and will show it in an enhanced 35 mm film format.

The film will also be shown in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, simultaneous with its Philippine release.



Can't wash away . . .

From page D4

answered, rolled eyes and said, "Grand Canyon ba, kung po." Never thought pesabo would be so polite and prayerful.

I had never seen so many kids in black attire, either. Like most of the crowd, the two Bolanon punks were garbed in their best BY (do u remember all-black gear—T-shirts, jeans and jackets with patches of the anarchy symbol, the peace sign and the SexPistols).

Had they found the music of the Hotlist, I asked again. "Opo," said one. "Yung favorit ni Jil Thrasher," replied the other.

Where did they like about punk, I pressed?

"Ano po, mamaya, tatakbo-takbo kami sa mosque."

And what was the message?

"Kahit ano pwedeng sabihin, pati galit sa pulutan ni."

Outside the gate, hundreds of kids thought they'd had enough fun and were walking away—it got hours—at 11 p.m., too early by rocker standards.

But the date's rain, it simply wouldn't stop and managed to get my pants and feet soggy. I had to chase a wily to get hailstops. Before I could say goodbye to the Bolan punks, they asked if I could open FLR on they could buy mores. I gave them P20.

Park's Lalee

"Salamat Anjay," they chorused. "Hindi ka nadi!"

Walking outside, all I could see were more punks huddled in groups under the makeshift shade provided by the concession stands, plastic... "Mga," asked one, "pano ba umuwi sila papuntang Bolan?"

The queue at the bathroom gate promptly started to lift, saying the mud was too deep for me to walk on. Even cars had their stuck in the mire for hours.

Pillar to do then?

It was almost midnight when a cab stopped in front me, unloading eight skinny kids all in black and scrambling to throw their fill of the muck.

"Nanood ng Ju ra. Tindu," related the driver, "Sinusulit ng mga bata ang pagkakataon pag gumala ang sila. E tuloy yung mga anak ng mayayaman ko, dadal'ko rin sila dito sa Metrobolan, ibang klase talaga yung hayhaha magkakaiba. Walang sawa sila."

Unsubstantiated, a local from Bolanon whose mom was declared "progressive area mental," topped nine other groups, all registered champions from Metro Manila, northern, central and southern Luzon, to win the top prize of P500,000 in cash, an endorsement deal from the device, a recording contract with Viva Records, local rock station airplay, apparel from Jockey and shoes from Converse.

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2 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	7 BINIBINING K
3 MONSTER HOUSE	8 THE WICKER MAN
4 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE	9 YOU ARE THE ONE
5 SCOOP	10 RESERVE

ERMITA

1 CRANK	
2 YOU, ME AND DUPREE THE WICKER MAN	5 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
3 MONSTER HOUSE	6 SCOOP
4 YOU ARE THE ONE	7 BINIBINING K

METRO EAST

1 CRANK	5 MONSTER HOUSE
2 THE WICKER MAN	6 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
3 YOU ARE THE ONE	7 SCOOP
4 YOU, ME AND DUPREE	8 BINIBINING K

NOVALICHES

1 CRANK	4 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE	5 BINIBINING K

CITISQUARE MALABON | PIONEER

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3 SNAKES ON A PLANE	3 MONSTER HOUSE
4 YOU ARE THE ONE	4 BINIBINING K

DASMARIÑAS | ANGELES

1 STAY ALIVE	1 CRANK
2 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	2 YOU ARE THE ONE
3 BINIBINING K	3 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
4 YOU ARE THE ONE	4 BINIBINING K

IMUS | STARMILLS

1 CRANK	1 SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE	2 CRANK
3 YOU'RE THE ONE	3 YOU ARE THE ONE
4 BINIBINING K	4 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
	5 BINIBINING K
	6 ETERNITY

BACOLOD | ILOILO

1 MIAMI VICE	1 SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 MORTUARY	2 MORTUARY
3 YOU ARE THE ONE	3 YOU ARE THE ONE
4 KISS KISS BANG BANG	4 STAY ALIVE
5 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 2	
6 STAY ALIVE	

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JASON Statham and Amy Smart star in "Crank."

Crazy, crafty 'Crank'

By Oliver M. Peluchaun
Contributor

YOU HAVE TO ADMIRE THE audacious storytelling chops of co-directors Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor on the action film "Crank."

The promising duo brings their hard-boiled script to life by mostly making use of visual techniques that incorporate TV ad, comic book and music video sensibilities. The result is a loud, noisy, and sometimes grisly thing, a deluge that doesn't look like the conventional point-by-numbers action flick. Its plot is inherently simple and dumb, but "Crank" proudly campaigns and takes no prisoners.

Its expositive muscle-and, sometimes, laughs is played by Jason Statham, who looks, sounds and even acts exactly like previous bad boy statham personas. He's just right as the unapologetic, politically incorrect and trigger-happy assassin Chev Chelios.

Can't slow down

Pursued by a rival, Ricky Verona (Jose Pablo Cantillo), Chev must endure his most taxing time since he got hit by a tranquilizer dart (Amy Smart) as entry, while inflicting pain on his tormentors. He needs to keep moving and maintain his adrenaline rush, because he'll die if he even slows down for a few minutes.

Proving enough for amateurs and innocent civilians alike, Chev proves to be a scrappy character that no one would feel sorry for. He's boastful, unemotional and ultimately someone who wouldn't need sympathy. How fitting, then, that he eventually finds it.

Unconventional

The directors play around with the conventional and deliberately don't make sense. Just look and, nonetheless, laugh. There's a fleeting but no-less-poignant cameo by Dwight Yoakam, strictly a novel for us to see. In certain scenes, a few words pop up on screen to emphasize or clarify conversations or unnecessary details. The directing duo also employs iconoverwhelmed photographic motifs, cut to quite obligingly. Imagine a flashback, for example, the voice of Statham's face slowly but noticeably spawn a retro-tinted orange hue. It grabs your attention more than a normal shift does when the flashback ends.

Such playful tinkering and groundbreaking, but the directors loosely tweak to website gimmicks and eye-popper techniques, however, they don't make it sound any different from a typical "Silverbox," sadly, in dialogue a portly title with mounting braggadocio. Still, "Crank" is a feisty and unabashed ride that'll disenchantly sound jaded soon.

REVIEW

Aiza Seguerra willing to have a baby—by IC?

I ALWAYS HAVE A BLAST WHEN I'M A guest in "Bistadong." My "sister in Christ" Rhea Almanilla (really) knows how to draw out his guests and audience. In my book, he's the best talk show host. Because when he asks you a question, you can feel that he's really interested in what your answer will be. Even if he does the show daily, no less not geekout to ever join his circle).

One topic for today's show which was taped Tuesday, was "My Mom, My Hero." Aside from my gay-ass IC and myself, other guests were Aiza Seguerra and her Mommy Carmi, Geoff Ogamonan and his mom Gloria Alajar. Before the cameras rolled, we all had a group hug because Mommy Carmi was meeting her AIZA-should-get-her-puppy and I had she wanted her dad to be IC!

Aiza and IC were game about the idea. Being the love triangle that I am, I have an observation, either Aiza and IC were schoolmates in Ob Montessori, then treated IC like she knows what's implied he was part of the crowd. "Mind's with child since like an! Why did we run out this way! Hahaha..." Gaza host in, laughing. "Excuse me! I was also a child (the first I'm saying)!"

Kidding aside, Aiza is really telling her side. "I'm unable to have a child," Nightingale Act Montessori is unable to have a child. Because of the connections! "I was quite surprised at how conservative Geoff is. He told me that, when he gets married, he'll make sure it will be for keeps. He doesn't want to live with it to regret years when I never thought as in a marriage."

Geoff really wanted like a one-woman man.

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

He admits that he's dating Nikki Gil but "I don't know if the current time of her guys, I don't make her house/ nurture. Bunny she, exclusive stay long." The Gilfriend mother-out mom moved on all to move with their ins privately/dying status."

Carmi chip, honey-mooning episode of "Momshop" at 10:30 a.m. today on ABS-CBN. It will remind you that only one mama will love as you just for better is for worse. But for ... ever.

FYI (For Your Indulgence)

Iza Calzado will direct off her "sweet" image in her next film (tentative title is "Gagapure Ding") as an escort girl based in Singapore. Maja Salvador are into first in the Lino Cayetano Legally, that is.

...

Aces-week insider-conscientious "Shaw with, ako, Brother, Sana ond Adria Huyet to be called Kings in "Iron Magic Pictures." They all have their own masks in terms of box office appeal and product endorsements. But why Enrique Maradit? (Hint: picture) Oh well ... it's almost Christmas [says insultent tang hum ... hum actor). "Shaw! Get the hint! Enrique!

...

Gerald Anderson still cast Actress til the pool [wink-coming his way. "I'm one month or six when I bump into Dyan and actor team. I need to watch them sang on TV." If there's one thing he is sure now that he just become an eastern audience idol after "PBB Teens," it's playing basketball daddy. Here he's no basketball TV team assignments.

...

Here's an official statement from the Kapamilya Network: "We would like to correct that ABS-CBN fan Magic continues to support the young actor despite the news about the compulsive gesture we artist Julio Pogue have. He did not don't the fight and has never been a troublemaker. Perhaps someone should look into the complainant's record to find the real troublemaker." They really look out for their artists like family, huh?

Behind the winners

Team Philippines' participation in the 2006 World Championship of Performing Arts in Hollywood has again brought phenomenal results. The country's representatives bagged a total of 86 awards. At the head is Bond of Hits composed by Ida Brosantes, author of almost all the WOWOW Philippines' anthems and vice president of the MMA Artist Center. But delegates on circumstances in saying that Ms. Ida was their beacon, his motivating and guidance paved the way for their success. The definitely has an incredible eye for world champions.

New album

Sponge Cola's new album "Yours" (Universal Records) already showcases their acclaimed musical abilities. It has 12 cuts, including "Bitter," "Tattoo" and "Bandido." The band has been more than a handful of hits ("Tangang," "DLE" etc.), which all went to the Sponge Cola's MOR charts. They can be romantic, it is simply primitive, but their weird almost sweaty garnishes feelings. Catch them as MYX Celebrity Visitor September.

E-mail wazzup@philstar.com

Just a minute, for the world

JOEY Generoso of Side A

JOEY GENEROSO UP SIDE A, the French Raindancer, Bonnie Perez, Bernard Hugh and Sonia Bowen Bay, Cassey, and actor actress Eliazar Cabahug, Joey Generoso, Tammy Cruz, Tanya Bray, Anna del Prado and JP Rhodessa Asphill also lend hands on Sunday of the worldwide movement (Isn't a Mouse class.)"

Joey is also going to "be serving as much just as a character of choice and change," organized by the Brother Eastside. The crazy event for the global launch is set at Bar Wembley Arena in London and will be led by Robbie Gibb of the Bar Gang, sometimes Baby Face and actor Chris Moore.

The Philippine launch via a pop concert will be held at the outdoor garden in Greenbelt 3 Makati, from 3 to 7 p.m. Simultaneous events are being arranged in major cities across the world, including Kiev, Moscow, Sydney, Johannesburg and Madrid.

Joey introduces regular ones-minute periods of silence into people's lives, whether one is a businessman or a housewife, a student or a public figure. The movement employs multi-media tools such as one-minute spoken meditations for downloading onto computers or podcasts, interactive text campaigns, and public programs.

Tammy Cruz is joining the Queensbridge concert as a personal testament. She first discovered it took up a regular routine of relaxing meditation. She attests, "Taking just a minute each hour will make the following 59 calmer, more focused and more effective."

Robin Gibb says: "Silence has always been a very important part of my life, and I think it's very much needed in the world today. I need silence to not only make decisions about the creative process but also to get my thoughts together, to reflect more."

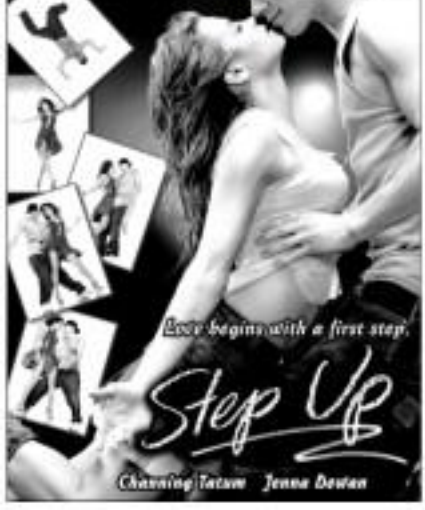
The sound's the thing

Sing is a delicious dish of hits and pieces of meat, diced and spiced and served sizzling.

Sing, the rock band, is a group that has put together numerous musical numbers, featured and banned one another and occupied all in one, not that the growing number of fans product to be the new big thing.

Sing plays Wednesdays at Boardroom Bar in Cubao.

Sets Ann Cubio, 2C Zambales, vocalist: "We've combined the sounds of local bands including Bamboo, Eraserheads, Rivermaya, The Dawn and international bands Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin. We also demonstrate our musical prowess in our original songs, as well as subgenres of rock and roll. But mainly, we're saying from my usual mode, my best song or rhythm, from Mr. A - Z."

The rest of the band are Cubio "Cud" Andres on guitars, Ryan Antonio Rodriguez also on guitars, Jeffrey Charlton "Chi" Sanchez on bass, and Raymund Carlo "Carlo" Serrano on drums.

Sing vocalist Angel Ann Abreu, "Sing," is also a member of the band "Big Teacher." Call or SMS 0917 5291566.